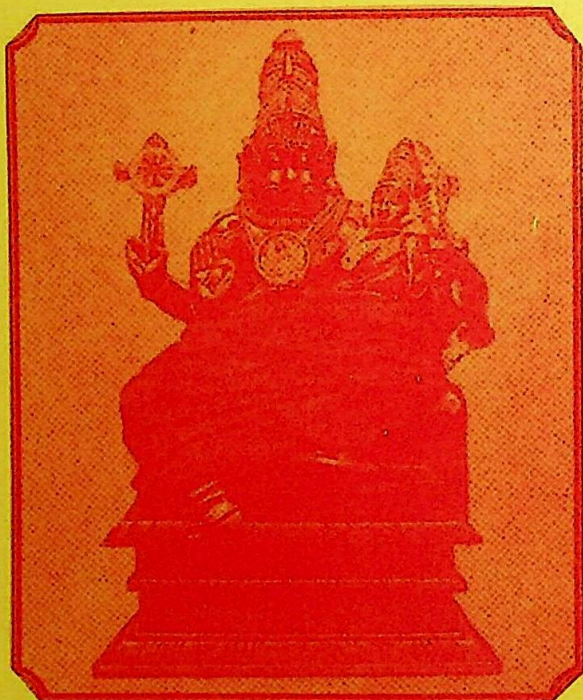


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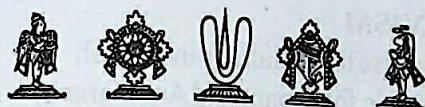
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An Elementary treatise for beginners
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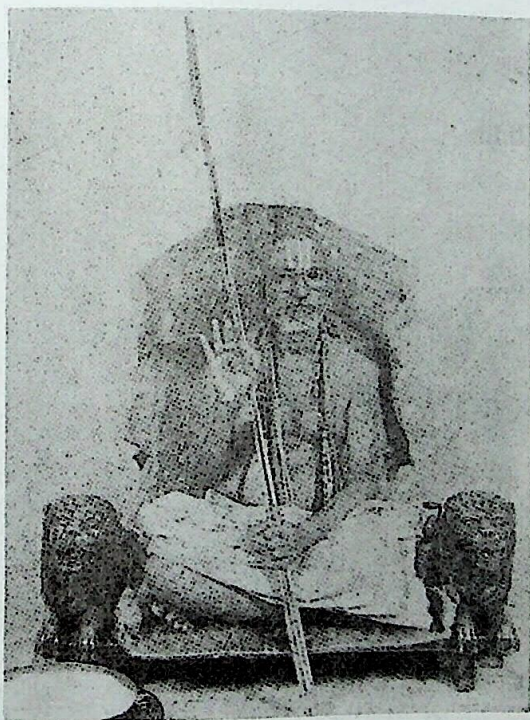
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॥ श्रीः ॥



श्रीमते श्रीलक्ष्मीनृसिंहपरब्रह्मणे नमः
श्रीमते श्रीलक्ष्मीनृसिंह दिव्यपादुकासेवक श्रीवणशठकोप
श्रीनारायणयतीन्द्रमहादेशिकाय नमः।

Sri Visishtadvaita Research Centre
66, Dr. Rangachari Road, Madras, 600 018

INTRODUCTION

(Revised second edition)

I have great pleasure to introduce the revised and enlarged edition of the book '**Srivaishnavism**'. In 1993, Sri Thillasthanam Swamy Kainkarya Sabha brought out a booklet with same title. This was very well received, particularly those abroad. Sri visishtadvaita Research Centre, in association with Sri Thillasthanam Swamy Kainkarya Sabha has brought this revised and enlarged edition of the book. The book lays emphasis on practical aspects of Srivaishnavism. In doing so, the relevant principles have also been explained - the intension being that one practices the precepts of Srivaishnavism with understanding.

Chapter I discusses the vedic tenets in the light of modern science. Chapter II discusses briefly the Srivaishnava Acharyas. Chapter III discusses the vedic concept of man and universe. Chapter IV discusses the various principles of Srivaishnavism namely Thatwathrya, role of an Acharya, Pancha samskara, Rahashya thraya Mantras and their significance, forms of Eshwara, Karmas, daily routines of a Srivaishnava, path to moksha, etc. Chapter V conclusion presents the essence of Srivaishnavism. Appendix I gives procedure and hymns for meditation through Rahasya thraya mantras. Appendix II gives a brief procedure of Bagavat Aradhanam.

The book presents - Srivaishnavism in a simple way and is meant for beginners or those abroad or those who want to start meditation, etc late in their life.

Our thanks are due to Veda Ratna Prof A. Ananta Narasimhachar, Head of Sanskrit department, A.P.S. College, Bangalore for his guidance in the preparation of this book. Our thanks are also due to all the Srivaishnavas and vedic scholars who have gone through the manuscript for use ful suggestions. Our thanks are also due to Staff of M/s. Elegant Printers, Bangalore. With prayers that the blessings of H. H. Ashiasingar of Ahobila Mutt be there on all those who use this guide to Srivaishnavism.

Madras
3.7.1996

S.V.S. Raghavan
Sri Visishtadvita Research Centre

Srimate Ramanujaya Namah

Srimate Vedanta Gurave Namah

Sri Satagopa Ramanuja Yathindra Mahadesikaya Namah

INTRODUCTION (First Edition)

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this booklet - Srivaishnavism - Principles and practice brought out jointly by Sri Thillasthanam swamy Kainkarya sabha; Sri Ramanavami Kain Karya sabha and Ananta Prakasana. This booklet brings out in a simple language the elements of Sri vaishnavism for a layman. The practical aspects particularly the minimum daily routines - have also been highlighted.

With the advent of Science, Vedic approach to universe is gaining recognition. Meditation is no longer considered as a mere ritual. The vedic approach has been that our planet (earth) is a part of the universe and the Systems of the universe have influence on the life in our planet. The human beings have a major role to play in this regard. All vedic philosophies aim at this objective.

Srivaishnavism aims to God - realisation within the frame work of our normal worldly activities. This aspect has been effectively brought out in this booklet. Starting from the lineage of teachers, the booklet discusses philosophy, Pancha samskara, Sarangathi and daily routines. The daily routines have been simplified to a minimum level. It will enable a beginner to make a beginning in right earnest and gradually improve. The presentation has been such as to create an interest in an individual to follow the principles of Srivaishnavism. The appendix in the booklet helps one to practice daily meditation. The appendix gives the general practice. However, there may be some minor changes in the practice followed in some institutions. Being very minor, it will not be difficult for each individual to get the changes incorporated in his practice. Some points explained in the later part of the book have been referred to in the earlier part. A second reading will help to clarify these points.

The sabhas undertook the preparation of this booklet as per the wishes of a number of individuals. The work of preparation of this booklet was entrusted to Sri A. Ananta Narasimhachar, Head of Sanskrit department, Acharya Pata Sala college of commerce, Bangalore and Sri Karyam, Paundarikapuram Ashram, Srirangam and Sri. V. R. Narasimhan, Secretary, Sri Thillasthanam Swamy Kainkarya Sabha, Bangalore. On behalf of the sabhas, I thank them for their fine effort and excellent presentation.

Shri Thillasthanam Swamy Kainkarya sabha was formed in 1956 in memory of Sri Thillasthanam swamy who promoted srivaishnavism extensively in Karnataka. This sabha celebrates its functions at Prasanna Sri Krishnaswamy temple, Thulasitottam, Bangalore. Sri Ramanavami Kainkarya sabha has been celebrating Sri Ramanavami at Prasanna venkataramanaswamy temple, Fort, Bangalore, for the past 85 years. Ananta Prakasana has been bringing out publications (Sri vaishnava literature) for the past few years. The resources at the command of these sabhas are very meagre. However, the sabhas have combined to do their humble service for the promotion of Sri vaishnavism. The sabhas look forward to the support of the public to bringout a few more publications of general interest. The sabhas are grateful to Sri E. Seshadri, Jayanagar, Bangalore and Sri K.V. Ranganath, LIC salem for providing financial support to this work.

It is hoped that this booklet will create interest in a number of persons and help them to follow the path of Srivaishnavism.

With prayers that the grace of the Lord be on everyone reading this book I conclude.

V.T.S. Raghavachar

President

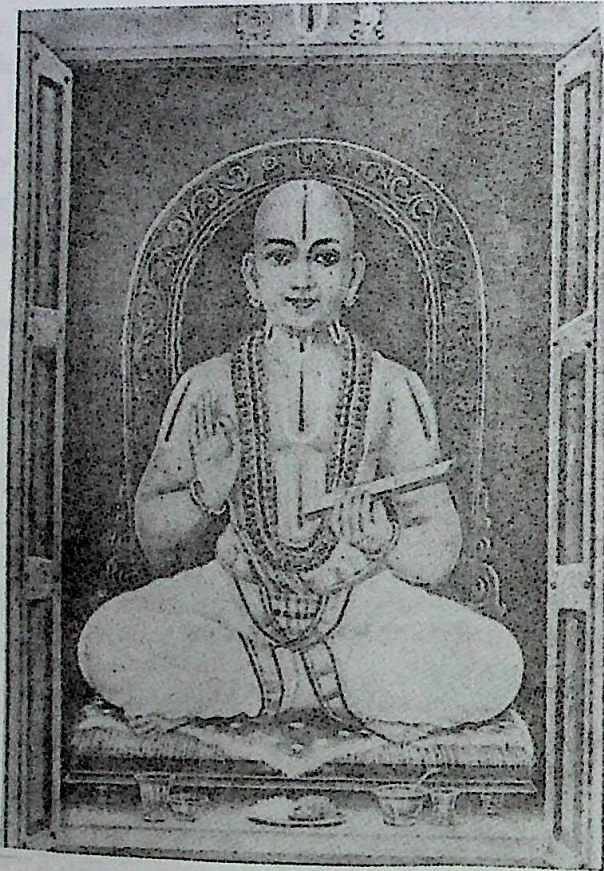
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Bangalore

Dated 8.9.1993



SRI RAMANUJA



SRI VEDANTA DESIKA

CHAPTER I

BACK GROUND

This book has been prepared for the benefit of a layman, particularly for beginners. This covers the elementary principles of Srivaishnavism, particularly the practical aspects. The emphasis in this book is more on Pancha Samskara and daily routines of a Srivaishnava.

With the advent of quantum physics and other scientific theories, the vedic approach to universe, relationship of man vis a vis the universe, is gaining recognition. The vedic approach is that our planet (earth) is a part of the universe, and the systems of the universe have influence on the life in our planet. Vedas lay great emphasis on meditation and other activities of humans, to attract beneficial cosmic radiations to our planet, which in turn help to provide an environment conducive to healthy development of body and mind of human beings.

With the progress in cosmic research, many scientists have evinced interest in theology and have brought out useful publications. Frank J. Tipler, a professor of mathematical physics, in his book¹ discusses the various theories of cosmology (omega point theory) and points out that the present observations are based on visible universe which is only a small fraction of the total universe. By defining the universe as the totality of all that exists (including the invisible portion of the universe), he points out the existence of a person or force that is omnipotent (unlimited power), omniscient (knowing everything) omnipresent (present everywhere). He further supports the concept of God in theology. He further argues the resurrection of the dead - and supports the theory of rebirth. He also brings out that the time moves and it is cyclic is character².

1. "The physics of Immortality" by Frank J. Tipler, Macmillan publications.

2. See Page 2.

In his book Fritjof Capra³, brings out many parallels between Modern physics and philosophies of the east (including vedic philosophies). He points out that the view of the world and universe held by scientists is very similar to those held by philosophers. The approach to knowledge through meditation (mystic powers) is not unscientific, though it does not conform to normally understood scientific methods.

Modern scientists, by passing sound waves through water, have produced high energy high temperature gas bubbles inside water. However, the application of this technology for the benefit of man kind is not yet known. Vedic studies also recognise this principle and it is used as energised water for the health of man-kind (which they call as purification).

There is flow of electricity in human body (this characteristic is used in Electro-cardiograph-ECG). This is referred to as Bio-Electricity. Electric currents pass in our body through 10 sets of lines corresponding to 10 fingers and toes. Finger tips and top of head constitute terminal points of these electric lines.

2. This is also the vedic approach, further they have identified the nature of periodicity. Vedic approach is as follows :

God creates *Brahma* who lives for hundred *Brahma* years, called '*Mahakalpa*'. At the end of '*Mahakalpa*', there takes place a '*Mahapralaya*'- that is, total annihilation including *Brahma*. This is followed by another *Brahma*, who will also continue as above. This cycle goes on. Every *Brahma* creates his contemporary creation everyday of his life in the morning and destroys it in the night. The duration of one *Chaturyuga* (four *Yugas*) is the basic cycle on which the wheel of time moves. One *Chaturyuga* comprises of *Kaliyuga* (432000 human years), *Dwapara Yuga* (864000 h.y.), *Treta Yuga* (1296000 h.y.), *Satya Yuga* (1728000 h.y.). Thus duration of one *Chatur Yuga* or one cycle is 4.32 million human years. One day of *Brahma* is 1000 cycles of *Chatur Yuga*, i.e., 4320 million human years. Further one day of *Brahma* is also called *Kalpa* and is divided into 14 *Manwantaras*. Thus, duration of one *Manwantara* is 308.6 million years. At present *Swetavaraha Kalpa*, the first day of the bright fortnight of the month. *Vaivasvatha Manwantara*, the 7th *Manwanthara* is in progress. In the *Vaivasvatha Manwantara*, the present time corresponds to first quarter of 28th *Kaliyuga*. This works out to 1980 million human years, during which life has existed on this earth. This compares well with the 2000 million years estimated by the modern Geologists. The concept of creation and destruction of life on earth (By *Brahma*) also finds similarity in the findings of Astro Physicists. It is believed that sun will encompass the earth one day in the long future.

The velocity of light as given in Bhashya of Sayanachariya on Rig Veda is thus :

योजनानां सहस्रे द्वे द्वे शते द्वे च योजने। एतेन निषिवादेन क्रममाणं नमोक्षते॥

(Sun's rays travel 2202 yojanas in half a *nimisha*)

A *yojana* is 16000 yds or 9 1/2 miles; a *nimisha* (Flipping of eyelids) is equivalent to 16/75 seconds. Thus, light travels 2202 yojanas in 8/75 seconds. This works out to 1,87,670 mls per second. This also compares with the scientific findings.

3. 'Tao of physics' by Fritjof Capra, Bantarr. Publications.

Bio-Electricity gets charged through water, earth, ether, etc.

This flow of electricity with in our body causes emission of electrons. This in turn causes an *Aura* around the individual (an invisible body of charged particles - also called Bio-plasmic body). Thus, an electro magnetic field is created around our body. Scientists have photographed this field through a process known as '*Kirlian photography*'. The inner '*Aura*' follows the contour of the body while the outer '*Aura*' is shaped like an inverted egg and may stretch a few inches away from the body (The depth of *Aura* depends on individuals. For people performing meditation etc, it will be very deep- Say some 10 to 12 inches or even more). Studies have shown that meditation has great influence on the Bio-plasmic body. Sri Vatsa varada charya in his work '*Paratwadi panchaka sthuti*' says regarding Antaryami as under :

यो देवादि चतुर्विधेषु जनिषु ब्रह्मान्दकोशान्तरे।
संभक्तेषु चराचरेषु निवसन्नास्ते सदान्तर्बहः।
विष्णुं तं निखिलेष्वणुष्वणुतरं भूयास्यु भूयस्तरं
स्वांगुष्ठप्रमितं च योगि हृदयेष्वासीनमीशं भजे॥

[One who lives in the four categories of life such as Devas, etc living in the middle of the universe created by Brahman; one who is always present both inside and **out side** of charas (Chetanas) and Acharas (Achetanas); one who lives in small atom size objects in a form smaller than that and in big objects in a form bigger than that; one who is seated in the heart of Yogis (those meditating) in a size of their thumb; I bow to that Lord].

This clearly establishes that our ancients had a good knowledge of '*Aura*' and also its great potential. Chou-Kuk-Sui⁴ has carried out intensive studies of this ancient Indian science with the help of Kirlian Photography. He has established that this '*Aura*' or outer body absorbs Bio-Energy from surroundings through specific points in it called '*Chakras*' (This is also an Indian terminology). This outer body has influence on the health of body and mind. All human ailments commence from this outer body. Bio-energy can be injected to an individual by a healer (another person) through these chakras

4. *The ancient science and art of pranic healing by chow-KuK-Suai published by health Accessories for all, philippines.*

and there by illness of the individual can be cured. He has also found that if any particular part of the body is amputated, the outer body or 'Aura' will not change, that is, it will still be there even after amputation. In this way Chou-Kuk-Sui started a new system of natural therapy known as 'Pranic healing'. and this therapy has received international recognition.

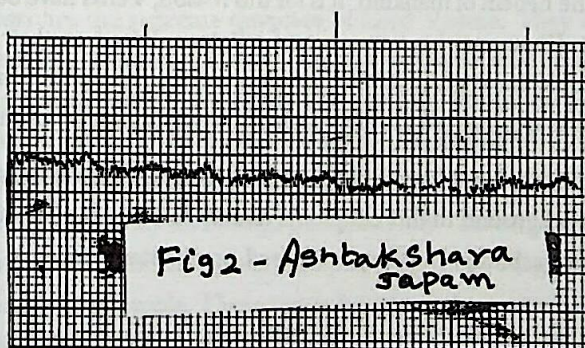
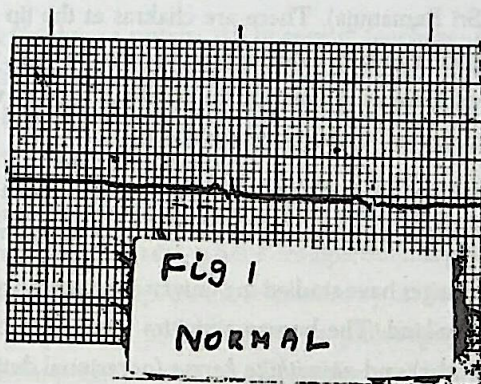
Meditation has great influence on this 'Aura' or outside body. In this context a reference to Sri Vedanta Desika's observation in his *Rahasya thraya sara* (Moola Mantradi kara) will be relevant. He says "Narada observes that Lord Narayana in the form of Ashtakshara travels in the face of those chanting Ashtakshara. In accordance with this Narada's statement, when an Acharya teaches a disciple the Ashtakshara Mantra, the Lord travels from the tongue of the Acharya to the heart of the disciple, and removes the ignorance of the disciple. Then the disciple understands himself and also knows that he is subordinate to God".

This is an important observation when seen in the light of 'Aura' or outer body discussed earlier. It brings out the power of Ashtakshara in enhancing 'Aura' (It has been reported that during meditation the 'Aura' stretches to several feet).

This also brings out the transference of Bio-energy from the Acharya to the disciple. When Acharya chants Ashtakshara, the outer body or 'Aura' of the Acharya expands to such a level as to reach the 'Aura' of the disciple. This intermixing of the 'Auras' of the Acharya and the disciple results in transfer of Bio-energy. Infact, the pranic healers are using this approach for curing various ailments. This is the reason a mantra has to be learnt through an Acharya only. In regard to Gayathri Mantra, It is the tradition that the father teaches his son this mantra. Prior to imparting the mantra to his son, the father should have chanted Gayathri Japam at least 24,000 times. Then only he will be eligible to teach his son. The significance here is that the father should strengthen his Aura.

A study was made to appreciate the effect of Ashtakshara Mantra on the ECG of an individual. ECG measures the potential of Bio-energy. In the absence of Kirlian facility, the measurement of Bio-potential helps to assess the

'Aura' or the outer body. ECG pictures were taken near heart. Fig. 1 is a normal one while Fig.2 is during chanting of Ashtakshara Japam. It will be seen that Bio-potential is not only more but also very steady during meditation through Ashtakshara. Thus, it is clear that 'Aura' or outer body expands.



In Vedic literature, the 'Aura' is referred to as 'Prabha' or 'Prabhavali'. Meditation improves 'Prabha' in individuals. The improvement of 'Prabha' will help to improve Budhi (mind or intellect) and Gyana (Knowledge). Archa form of the Lord in temples (also Saligramam) has this 'Prabha' or 'Aura'.

The 'Aura' or outer body has received importance in a number of vedic rituals. The relevance of these rituals can be appreciated only in the

context of Bio-plasmic body. For instance, Sandyavandanam is a ritual which helps to strengthen the Bio-plasmic body. That is the reason, it is a nitya Karma or a daily routine. It should be performed under all circumstances.

Anjali Mudra is an important mode of expressing regards or respects. In this palms of both hands are joined with fingers pointing upwards (see the photograph of Sri Ramanuja). There are chakras at the tip of fingers. These chakras attract and or absorb Bio-energy from surroundings, particularly when we recite or chant Mantras. Therefore, this mudra is used on various occasions. (this has been indicated at appropriate places).

The benefits of chakras at the tip of fingers and in the palm is also used in '*Aradhanam*' that is, worshipping of the Lord, to energise water.

Thus, our sages have studied the universe, primarily from considerations of benefits to man-kind. The human activities have been classified as '*Nitya Karma*' (daily duties) and *naimithika karma* (occasional duties). Meditation is considered as a means by which celestial radiations from the universe can be drawn for the benefit of mankind. It is for this reason, Vedas have been accepted as the basis (Pramana) by a number of religions. Based on their experience, various people have given their formulations, for the uplift of mankind. Sri Ramanuja has expounded the approach of Sri vaishnavism for a similar purpose.

In this book, we have discussed the Srivaishnavism in the conventional way. The background in this chapter is mainly to bring out the fact that vedic tenets are not arbitrary but they are based on a systematic work.

Prayer is the most powerful of energy one can generate. It is a force as real as terrestrial gravity. In Prayer, human beings seek to augment their finite energy by addressing themselves to the infinite source of all energy. When we pray, we link ourselves with the inexhaustible motive power that spins the universe. Whenever we address God in fervent prayer, we change both soul and body for the better.

Dr. Alexis Carrel

CHAPTER II

LINEAGE OF SRI VAISHNAVA TEACHERS

In the Sri Vaishnava system, the lineage of teachers - *Guru parampara* - has great significance. It is believed that they came to the earth at the behest of the Lord to help refining erring mortals. Let us, therefore, begin with the lineage of teachers of Sri Vaishnava philosophy.

Sri Vaishnavism, probably, is as old as Veda itself. It is believed sage Bhodayana, Srivatsanka, Guhadeva, have brought out this philosophy but their writings are not available except for the references by Sri Ramanuja and others. Promotion and propagation of Sri Vaishnava philosophy was done by Sri Ramanuja. Therefore, Sri Vaishnava philosophy and Vishistadwaitha have become synonymous.

Alvars are the supreme devotees of Lord Vishnu. They are foremost amongst the Sri Vaishnava teachers. They are overwhelmed by the desire for incessant communion with the Lord. They remain immersed in singing the divine glories of the Lord. The songs composed and sung by them is referred to as "*Divya Prabhandam*". There are in all 4000 songs - all in Tamil. These songs are a literary beauty and brings out effectively "*Saranagathi approach*" to god realisation. It is, therefore, customary to sing these songs during pujas - both at home and at temple. These songs bring out the essence of Vedas and hence called "*Tamil Vedas*". Describing the various avatars of the Lord, these songs bring out lucidly the omnipotency, easy accessibility, Kindness and affection of the Lord. Even ordinary people can recite these songs with understanding and offer their prayers. Unlike Vedas, there are no restrictions. Anyone irrespective of caste, creed or sex can recite.

There are twelve (12) Alvars who spread the cult of Vishnu Bhakti. They are 1) Poigai Alwar (Saro muni), 2) Bhuta Alwar, 3) Pey Alwar, 4) Peri Alwar (Vishnuchitta). 5) Tirumalisai Alwar, 6) Kulasekara Alwar 7) Tirupan

Alwar, 8) Tondarpadi Alwar, 9) Tirumangai Alwar, 10) Nammalwar (Satari or Satagopan), 11) Madurakavi Alwar, 12) Andal.

Tirumangai Alwar is the last of the Alwar group. Alwars are considered to be incarnation of Nitya-suris in Vaikuntam. Philosophers put the period of Alwars to B.C. while historians place them from 300 to 700 AD. There are good books on the life of Alwars and hence this subject has been kept out of the scope of this book.

In the post Alwar period, there were a number of Srivaishnava teachers and amongst them Nathamuni heads the list. By the time Nathamuni was born, the songs of Divya Prabhandam were out of circulation except for some ten songs. Nathamuni happened to listen to these songs in Aramudan temple at Kumbakonam and was deeply impressed. He noted in these songs the phrase "*Thousand told by Kuruhur Satagopn*" and started searching for the remaining songs. He however, concluded that the author was "*Satagopan*" and his place was "*Kanakapuri*" (now known as Alwar-Tirunagari). Even after vigorous efforts, he did not succeed. Later, on the advise of some knowledgeable persons, he meditated on Nammalwar (Satagopan) sitting beneath the Tamarind tree considered to be the birth place of Satagopan. Nammalwar appeared before Nathamuni and taught him not only the 1000 songs of his composition but also remaining 3000 songs of other Alwars. He also taught him the secret of yoga, the three sacred mantras, etc. This was how the "*Divya Prabhandham*" came back to usage. Nathamuni travelled extensively and propagated Sri Vaishnava Philosophy. His principal deciples were Pundarikaksha and Rama mishra.

Nathamuni had a son by name Eshwara muni, who in turn had a son Yamuna. This boy was called Yamuna in token of Nathamuni's visit to Mathura and Brindavan in the north. Yamuna lost his father in the very early part of his life and thus spent his childhood days with Nathamuni. Yamuna got his training from Mahabhashya Bhatta and others. He had a sharp intellect and was a profound thinker. As a result, he was able to interpret Vedas and Smrithis lucidly. His knowledge of Sastras was so thorough that he defeated the Scholar in the court of Chola King and in the process he won the kingdom. Infact, he

ruled the kingdom competently. Later Ramamishra, disciple of Nathamuni, impressed Yamuna, the glory of his family tradition and as a result, Yamuna renounced the kingdom and took up to the worship of Lord Ranganatha at Srirangam. He also took up to the promotion of Sri Vaishnavism. His works include "*Siddhitraya*", "*Githartha Sangraha*", "*Agama Pramanya*", "*Chatu sloki*" and "*Stotra Ratna*". In "*Siddhitraya*" and "*Stotra Ratna*" he has made an effort to give a scientific explanation of Sri Vaishnavism. He was keen to explain vedic Sutras according to Sri Vaishnavism. Therefore, he started looking around for someone who could help him and continue the same after him. During his visit to Varada's temple at Canjeevaram, he saw Ramanuja. He was so impressed by Ramanuja that he immediately made "*Saranagathi*" to Lord Varada praying to give Ramanuja for promotion of Sri Vaishnavism. Yamuna died in 1041 AD. Yamuna was confident that Ramanuja would take up the cause of Sri Vaishnavism and this he had indicated to his disciples.

Yamuna's saranagathi bore fruit. Ramanuja was also a great intellect and a scientific thinker. He had his problems and was looking for a teacher or Guru. He was deeply impressed when he heard the verses from Yamuna's "*Stotra Ratna*". Ramanuja could not meet Yamuna during Yamuna's life time. After learning from Mahapurna the efforts of Yamuna to promote Sri Vaishnavism, Sri Ramanuja immediately accepted Mahapurna as his teacher, and moved to Srirangam to continue the efforts of Yamuna. Under the tutelage of a number of teachers, Sri Ramanuja was able to pool all the knowledge available. Being intelligent and a scientific thinker, he gave a scientific explanation of Sri Vaishnavism in his famous "*Sri Bhasyam*". His philosophy was known as "*Vishishtadvaitam*". He travelled all over the country and promoted this philosophy. He also set up 74 centres of excellence all over the country for its promotion. He appointed a disciple of his in charge of each of these centres. These centres were empowered to perform Pancha samskara, teaching of Mantras and promotion of philosophy. Sri Ramanuja also encouraged his disciples to make an in depth study on specific topics like meaning of mantras, Sri Bhashya and Vedas, Divya Prabandam and promote them. As a result of these efforts, Sri Vaishnavism spread all over the country including the North-Eastern region and also withstood the subsequent muslim invasion. The present

day institutions like Ahobila mutt, Parakala mutt, Sri Vanamamalai mutt, Poundrikapuram Andavan Ashram, Srirangam Andavan Ashram, Jeers mutt at Kanchi, Srirangam, Tirumala, Melkote, etc., are the outcome of these efforts of Sri Ramanuja. All these institutions have been promoting Sri Vaishnavism's 'Saranagathi approach' to guide people.

Ramanuja's '*Sri Bhashyam*' is the basic treatise on '*Vishistadvaita*' philosophy and explains the various sutras of Badarayana. Among his other works "*Nitya Grantha*" explains the procedure of worship. "*Saranagathi gadya*" explains the procedure of surrender. This is an elaboration of '*Dvaya mantram*'. "*Sriranga Gadya*" brings out the glory of Archa forms of the Lord, while "*Vaikunta Gadyam*" is devoted to "*Vaikuntam*" and para form of the Lord there. The three Gadyas are referred to as "*Gadyathraya*" and are helpful to meditate on the Lord.

Thus, Sri Ramanuja established Srivaishnavism on a sound foundation and fulfilled the mission started by Yamuna. This effort was continued by Vatsya Varadacharya, Kadambi Appular, Vedanta Desika, Kuresa, Parasara Bhatta, Nanjeer, Pillai Lokacharya, Manavala Mamuni and others. It is to the credit of Sri Vedanta Desika that he brought out number of works, to facilitate a clear understanding of Sri Vaishnavism.

This is briefly the contributions of various Sri Vaishnava Acharyas. Let us salute them before studying the philosophy of Sri Vaishnavism. Amongst the Srivaishnava Acharyas, Kulasekara Alwar and Yamuna have shown that worldly activities and spiritual activities are complementary and thus stand as a model for present generation. Kula sekara Alwar was a king, a great warrior, and a good administrator. At the same time, he was a great devotee of the God. He looked at his kingly duties as service to God only. According to Srivaishnavism, the job we do for our living should be considered as service to God.

CHAPTER III

MAN AND UNIVERSE

God is the absolute reality, endowed with all auspicious and excellent attributes which are unsurpassable. He is the inner ruler of matter (a non sensuous thing or Achit) as well as souls or Atman (a sensuous thing or Chit). In the State of cosmic dissolution (Pralaya), which occurs at the end of a Kalpa (a cycle of four yugas), matter and souls exist in a subtle state in Him possessing none of the qualities which make them objects of experience or cognising subjects. From this subtle state, creation evolves by the will of God. Subtle matter (Achit also called Tamas) develop into gross form. Matter (Achit) in gross form will be of 24 types such as Prakriti⁵ etc. Mixture of the various types of Achit is our world and body of living things. Souls (Chit) expand their consciousness, entering into connection with the bodies appropriate to their past karma (actions) and continue the cycle of births and deaths, that is, Samsara. Out of compassion for the souls God also teaches Vedas - a treatise discussing nature of souls, Prakriti or nature, God or Paramatman, causes of Samsara, way to get out of Samsara(Moksha) etc., through Brahma and a lineage of Sages.

Vedas are the starting point of all philosophies. Like all Sanskrit literatures, Vedas also include both prose and poetry. Though the texts convey meaning, it is its vibration (shabda) aspect that is important.

Vedas were used prominently for yagna or yaga. Everyone knew the Veda in full once upon a time. Gradually it became difficult to learn the Vedas in full by a single person. Hence, Veda Vyasa divided it into four parts - *Rig, Yajur, Sama* and *Atharwana*.

⁵ Prakriti, Mahat, Ahamkara, Pancha Karmendria (sense), Pancha Gyanendria (thought), Manas (mind), Shabdan matra (sound), Akasa (ether), Sparshatan matra (touch), Vayu, Roopatan matra (look), Tejas, Rasatan matra (taste) AAP (water), Gandhatan matra (smell), Prithvi.

Each Veda is further subdivided into *Samhita*, *Brahmana*, *Aranyaka* and *Upanishad*. *Samhita* and *Brahmana* are used mostly in yagnas and covers Mantras as well as procedure for them. *Aranyaka* covers mostly worship of God. It is *Upanishad* that discusses the nature, soul, prakriti, Paramathman (God) and their relationship.

Starting from Brahma, the promotion and propagation of Vedas, has been mainly through Sages and their disciples. A peculiar aspect of Veda has been that all information relating to any topic cannot be found at one place. As a result, the interpretation of statements in Vedas has not been uniform, leading to conflict or contradictions, though it is not true when viewed as a whole. The *Advaita* School of Thought gives prominence to *Abheda Shrutis* or statements indicating that soul and Paramatman are one. Similarly, the *Dvaita* School of Thought gives prominence to *Bheda Shrutis* or statements indicating that soul and Paramatman are different. There are also statements in Vedas compromising these two extreme views - called *'Ghataka Shruti'*. Sri Ramanuja has used these, to bring out cohesiveness of various statements. We see in this world, body and soul act as one and in unison, though they are different. The body is subordinate to soul. In the same manner, the soul though different from Paramatman, is body of Paramatman and as such His subordinate. This is the principle of Sri Ramanuja's Vishistadvaita and in this way he has explained the cohesiveness of statements in Veda. *Chit*, *Achit* and *Eshwara* are inseparable - cannot be shown separately.

For a better understanding of Vedas, knowledgeable Sages have given their interpretation of Vedic statements. These are referred to as *'Smriti'* or *'Tantra Shastra'* or *Purana*. These along with *Ramayana*, *Bhagavatam*, *Bagawat Gita*, *Brahma-sutras*, etc., help a great deal in interpretations of vedic statements.

Vedas discuss the relationship of man vis a vis the universe. Hence, it is taken as an authority (pramana) by various religious teachers. Ramanuja has also based *'Srivaishnavism'* on vedic principles.

CHAPTER IV

PRINCIPLE AND PRACTICE

4.1 Tatwa Thraya (or three realities)

Sri Vaishnavism is as old as Veda itself. Sri Ramanuja gave a scientific explanation of Sri Vaishnavism and hence has become synonymous with Vishistadvaita. Sri Vaishnavism attempts to help an individual to cross Samsara - cycle of births and deaths. Sri Vaishnavism recognises three realities, namely *Chit* (sensuous objects) and *Achit* (non-sensuous objects) and *Eshwara* (God). This is referred to as '*TatwaThraya*' or Three realities. Achit is of 24 types such as prakriti, etc., Achit do not have capacity to show itself. It can show itself only through chit. Both chit and Achit are subordinate to Eshwara. "Surrender to Lord" or "Saranagathi" is the main process for Moksha - that is redeeming of samsara.

Soul - This is also called '*Atman*', '*Jiva*', '*Jivatman*', '*Chit*', '*Chetana*' etc. When we see a sensuous object in this world, we can see or experience its body, senses, mind, intellect, etc. At the same time, we notice also egoistic or individualistic character in it. This is due to a hidden force in it. This is '*soul*', which though forms an integral part of the individual, cannot be experienced or seen. A soul and a body are inseparable and inter-dependent upto the point the soul is relieved of samsara. A soul gets a body according to its karmas. Also, it has to use this body only to get the grace of God for Moksha. Thus, the soul is instrumental in guiding the various activities of the body. This soul is subordinate to God and constitutes His (Lord's) body. The souls are many and atomic in character. Though there are no intrinsic differences among them, their external manifestations and behaviour depend on their past karmas.

There are three types of souls - *Nitya*, *Mukta* and *Bhadda*. *Nityas* are those who have been serving the Lord since long like Garuda, Visvakshena,

etc., *Muktas* are those who were in this world with birth and death and subsequently by the grace of the Lord obtained by following the Path of Bhakti yoga or Saranagathi, have reached Vaikuntam. *Bhaddas* are those experiencing samsara. If these souls get the grace of the Lord, they can also join Nityas and Muktas in the service of the Lord at Vaikuntam. If this has to happen, the Bhaddas have to follow the measures given in Vedas (Bhakti yoga or Saranagathi).

Prakriti - Prakriti or nature is also subordinate to God and exist in 8 forms such as earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect and ego. Prakriti also includes various Tan matras (energy in the form of radiations) that can give facilities of touch, smell, etc., The whole world and the body of Souls are evolved out of Prakriti under the will of God. Prakriti has three Gunas or characters - namely *Satwa*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. A soul in association with Prakriti also acquires these characters. 'Satwa' Character gives truth fulness, honesty, devotion to God, etc., 'Rajas' gives mischievous and destructive character, while 'Tamas' gives greediness, short temper, etc., For Moksha, enhancing of 'Satwa' character is essential.

Eshwara - God is the absolute reality and infinite in character. He (God) constitutes body for both 'Soul' and 'prakriti' and has them under His control. He alone has powers to redeem a soul from samsara. He manifests in five forms (discussed later) and as '*Antaryami*' resides in every individual in the universe.

At all times and under all circumstances, Eshwara is associated with His consort Goddess Lakshmi (in His right chest) and hence is referred to as '*Shriyah patih*'. God and His consort Goddess Lakshmi constitute one entity and hence together constitute "*Parabrahman*" or "*Paramatman*". As he is the supporter of soul and prakriti, He is referred to as Sriman Narayana. He exists everywhere and hence known also as *Vishnu*.

God creates this world from prakriti for the benefit of Bhaddas (souls). This is also His action oriented world (Leela Vibhuti) and as such provides Him an opportunity to display various qualities for which opportunities do not

exist in Vaikuntam.⁶ Creation, sustenance and destruction of this world are His will only. In contrast Vaikuntam is His permanent world (Nitya vibhuti). Only when souls reach this permanent world, there will be no problem of birth and death. That is, the soul attains 'Moksha'. In Vaikuntam, a soul will be always experiencing God and thus be as happy as the Lord Himself. There will be no question of re-birth.

Being impartial, God gives a 'soul' a body in accordance with his karmas. He also gives freedom for the soul to do karmas. Being kind, He gives Vedas for the benefit of souls and also sends great persons to earth to guide the souls to follow the path of Veda.

A soul being in association with the prakriti, is not in a position to know either itself or God. Hence, it will be going through cycles of birth and death. God will not allow this cycle to continue eternally. In one of the cycles, the soul will do some good deed, knowingly or unknowingly (with or without any objective) and this will attract the attention of God. Keeping this in mind, God will grace this soul at the time of birth at its next cycle. This blessing will help the soul to think of its salvation and do 'Bhakti yoga' or 'Saranagathi (surrendering to God). By surrendering, the soul will be able to improve its 'satwa', character through the grace of the Lord and thereby understand and practise precepts of Veda.

Thus, according to Srivaishnavism every individual in this world is an inseparable combination of Soul (Chit), Prakriti (Aчит) and Eshwara (Antaryami). Every soul gets a body (evolved out of Prakriti) in accordance with his karmas. The soul and body are inseparable and interdependent in an individual. We experience or see or hear only the Prakriti component (body) of this combination and not the soul component, even though it is the soul component that is responsible for the activities of the individual. Eshwara (Antaryami) resides in the body but does not take part in the worldly activities of the body. However, His help is available for the soul to cross the Samsara.

6. God has qualities such as दया (Kindness - if one is suffering, help him out of suffering), क्षमा (Pardon - pardoning one's mistake), समीप (mix with all without discrimination), विसृज्य (overlook one's flaw and treat him with love). These qualities can not be displayed in Vaikuntam. Potential for displaying these qualities exist only in this world made out of Prakriti. Hence, God comes to this earth in vibhava Avatars (Rama, Krishna etc.) or Archa forms (Thrumala, Srirangam etc.) and exhibits these qualities.

Prof. S Rangachar has given in his book 'Rahasyathraya Sara', how Sri Thillastahnam Swamy⁷ used to explain this principle of Srivaishnavism. It is given below :

"According to Vishistadvaita, there are three realities - namely Chit, Achit and Eshwara. According to Advaita only Eshwara is the reality and this world is Maya. According to Dvaita System, Eshwara is a reality. Also this world made up of Chit and Achit is also a reality. But these two are different.

In Vishistadvaita, Chit, Achit and Eshwara are all realities. The sensuous objects of this world are made out of Chit (Soul) and Achit (Prakriti). This combination is referred to as Chetana or Jeevathma, etc., Paramathma (Eshwara) is 'Vishista' (together and yet distinct) to Jeevathman. However, both Jeevathman and Paramatman exist together always.

In Gyana Mudra (also called upadesa mudra or Vyakhya Mudra), Right hand thumb and first finger are together, while the remaining three fingers remain separately. The togetherness of thumb and first finger represents Vishista plus Advaita, that is separate and yet together of Jeevathma and Paramatma. The three remaining fingers indicate the tatvas (realities) of Vishistadvaita namely - Chit, Achit and Eshwara. Advaitins raise only the first finger to denote that only Brahma is real. The Dvaitins raise the first and middle fingers to denote that Jeevathma and Paramatma are different. Thus, the three schools of thought have different Gyana Mudras."

4.2 Role of an Acharya

The Vedas are an ocean of knowledge. Even as a soul understands and practises Vedic precepts, being tinged with Rajas and Tamas, it is possible that his attention will be drawn towards worldly things like wealth, etc., and he will pursue Vedic precepts for those purposes. To guard against such situations, a soul needs the guidance and grace of an Acharya or teacher. An Acharya will help the soul to follow the right path for Moksha.

7. Shri Thilla Stahnam Swamy was a member of staff of Ahobila mutt, worshipping Lord Malola Lakshmi Narasimha. He became an independent Sanyasin in 1914 and travelled all over South India, promoting Sri Vaishnavism in general, and traditions of Ahobila mutt in particular during his life time up to 1956. He was a profound Vedic Scholar and a good teacher. His exposition of Ramanuja's 'Sri Bhayam' and Vedanta Desika's 'Rahasya thraya sara' was considered to be exemplary. Prof S. Rangachar, himself a great scholar was a disciple of Shri Swami.

As already explained in Chapter I, every individual approaches an Acharya for "Samashrayanam" and "Bharanyasa" rituals of Srivaishnava philosophy. (These will be explained later in this book). Grace of an Acharya is essential for successful practice of Saranagathi. It is, therefore, customary to chant the 'Tanian' of the Acharya (from whom the individual gets Samashrayanam and / or Bharanyasam) for getting his grace. 'Tanian' is a small verse, which gives generally the descendancy of the Acharya. It is said that chanting of Acharya's Tanian pleases God very much as He (God) Himself is the first Acharya.

If one gets a good Acharya, his salvation is assured. In chapter I we have explained the relevance of learning a Mantra or Hymn from an Acharya. Ramanuja while propagating Srivaishnavism, duly considered this aspect also. He set up 74 units all over the country (including North India) to promote Srivaishnavism and put them in charge of one of his disciples. This step has helped in the preservation of the Acharya System and promotion of Srivaishnavism.

4.3. Paths for Moksha

A soul has to use the body given to it by God for life in this world, to pursue the path for Moksha. There are two paths for Moksha - namely Bhakti yoga and Prapatti.

For Bhakti yoga, he will be born in a Brahmin, Khshyatria or Vyshya family, study Veda fully with understanding and gain knowledge of the three Tatwas. Being desirous of getting Moksha, he will perform the Nitya (daily) and other prescribed karmas in Vedas for the pleasure of God and as His Service (without expecting benefits). This is karma yoga. When he continues like this for a long time, he will get self realization. This is gyana yoga. After this he will worship the God by any one of the 8 yogas prescribed in Upanishad. First, he will realise his own self. By continuing further, he will realise the Antaryami God within him self, initially hazily and later intermitently. Once he realises God steadily, he surrenders to Him. Thus, by the grace of God, he gets Moksha.

This path is quite tough and takes long duration. The obstacles are also many. It is applicable to three varnashramas only and even here ladies are excluded.

Prapatti - This path is different. There are no restrictions. All can follow irrespective of caste, creed, age or sex. One can perform prapatti not only for himself but also for others including animals, birds, plants, etc. In this path, the individual surrenders to God expressing his limitations to follow the yogic path. This is a simple process with huge benefits. Therefore, God expects the individual to follow a few rules during the tenure of the present life.

They are :

- a) **Anukulasya Sankalpah** - Resolve himself to do only such actions as are favourable to supreme Lord. This includes:
 1. Follow the dharma of the Varnashrama (Nitya and Naimithika Karmas)
 2. Respect to Bhagavathas - devotees of God.
 3. Should not worship other Devathas except Lord Srīman Narayana,
- b) **Pratikulasya Varjana** - Resolve to avoid all actions not favoured by the Supreme Lord.
- c) **Raksheshyatiti Visvasah** - Have full confidence in the Lord that He will protect him.
- d) **Karpanyokthi** - Confess to Lord his inability to do anything except surrendering at the Lord's Feet,
- e) **Atma Nikshepa** - Express his total dependence on the Lord for his protection. Surrender to Him and entrust to Him the protection of himself and others dependent on him.

Having resolved as above, the individual surrenders to God for protection. This is known as '*Saranagathi*' or '*Prapatti*' or '*Nyasa*' or '*Bharanyasa*' or '*Bhara samarpana*'. In the post Saranagathi period also he should observe

the rules stated earlier. If one performs '*Saranagathi*', the Lord will remember it and will help him to get Moksha at the time of his death. The act of *saranagathi* or surrender is done through Mantras only - Chanted with pure devotion.

Alwars have shown the path of *Saranagathi* for Moksha. They are deeply attached to the Lord. They take delight in chanting His names or Singing songs in praise of Him, or any act associated with God.

4.4. Karmas

Karmas are essentially deeds or acts - both physical and mental. All our philosophies are based on Karma theory - namely, you get for what you have done. Ever since a soul started its life in this world, it would have accumulated karmas.⁸ All karmas will not give fruits immediately. The karmas are classified as '*Aagami*', '*Prarabda*' and '*Sanchita*'. Past karmas which have not yet given fruits are called '*Aagami*' karmas. Karmas which are responsible for the present life and have started giving fruits are called '*Prarabda*' karmas. Similarly, karmas done in the present life that gives fruits in future are called '*Sanchita*' karmas. Good karmas such as puja, meditation, vows (*vrata*) and bad karmas such as disrespect of Bhagavatas (*bhagavatapachara*) will not form '*Sanchita*' and instead their fruits are to be enjoyed in the current life itself.

At the time of *prapatti* (*Saranagathi*), the Lord will relieve the individual of '*Aagami*' and '*Sanchita*' karmas⁹ leaving only the *Prarabda* karmas which have begun giving results. What happens to karmas after *prapatti* ? If done out of ignorance, he will be pardoned. On the other hand, if done with knowledge, he will get some minor punishment. He can escape this punishment through atonements (*Prayaschita*) as prescribed in shastra. If he is unable to perform atonements as per shastras he can alternatively perform *saranagathi* or surrender on this account. This is known as *prayaschita prapadana saranagathi*.¹⁰ Thus,

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8. This aspect finds support in the book "The physics of immortality" by Frank J. Tipler. He opines soul as a chip with memories.
 9. Karmas are a form of energy. Energy cannot be created or destroyed. What happens to the *Aagami* and *Sanchita* karmas of a surrendered (*Saranagathi*) ? The lord distributes these to other chetanas at their request - good deeds to friends and bad deeds to enemies.
 10. It will be explained later that meditation through *Rahasyathraya* mantras is also *Saranagathi*.

at the time of death, a Saranagatha (one who has surrendered) will be devoid of all karmas and will be fit to reach God.

Is God helpless in regard to Prarabda Karmas? Sri Vedanta Desika says that God can help the individuals even in regard to Prarabda Karmas, if he so desires, as His powers are infinite. He says:-

प्राणे स्वामित्वं औचित्यं न्यासाद्याः सहकारिणः।
प्रदानहेतुः स्वातंत्र्यं विशिष्टा करुणा हरेः॥

(In regard to protection of individuals, qualification of the individual, His lordship, performance of Saranagathi, are only means. The main factor protecting the individuals, is the kindness of the Lord through His free will)^{10(a)}

By nature God is kind. He wants to help the chetanas. He will help only when sought for. The basic approach in Sri vaishnavism is to cultivate the grace and kindness of the Lord. This world is His *Leela Vibuti* and created out of *Prakriti*. It is not easy for a chetana to overcome the effects of *Prakriti*. Even here His help is required. The three Srivaishnava mantras help to earn the grace and kindness of the Lord.

10(a) Prof. S. Rangachar in his book *Rahasyathraya sara* has given the way Sri Thillastahnam Swamy used to explain this verse. It is given below :-

"A devotee was doing penance under a big Banian tree. His only desire was to see the Lord Vishnu. One day sage Narada was passing that way. The devotee saluted the sage Narada and requested for a favour, and Narada readily agreed. The devotee said "Sir, you are visiting all the three worlds. Kindly ascertain from Lord Vishnu when he will give me darshan". Sage Narada went to Lord Vishnu and asked him when the devotee will get darshan. The Lord replied "The person has substantial prarabhdha Karmas to his account. However, you may tell him that he will get the darshan after so many years as there are leaves in the big tree under which he is meditating". Narada returned and conveyed the reply of the Lord. The devotee when he heard the words "will get darshan" (no matter when), started jumping with joy, saluted Narada, and so on. Sage Narada was stunned at the joy of the devotee. So was the Lord Vishnu. The Lord appeared and gave darshan to the devotee. The devotee was overjoyed, speechless, embraced the Lord, started singing, in praise of the Lord. Later Sage Narada asked Lord Vishnu, "What did you tell me ? What did you do ?" The Lord replied "The devotee when he just heard the words "Will get Darshan" "became so happy that I wanted to see how much more, happy he would be when he actually saw me. Hence I came" This is the kindness of the Lord. Even if there are obstacles, he has the freedom to remove them to help his devotees. This is the meaning of 'स्वातंत्र्यं विशिष्टा करुणा हरेः'."

Sri Vatsa Varadacharya in his *Paramartha stuthi* echoes the samethought. He says a Saranagatha will be relieved of Sanchita and Agami Karmas. Also he experiences *Prarabda* karma without agony.

4.5 Forms of Eshwara

Now, let us discuss the forms of Eshwara or paramatman. According to *Pancharatra Agama* God exists in five forms

1. *Para*. This is the form of Lord in *Vaikuntam*, This form is essentially for *Nityas and Muktas*. Sri Vatsya Varadacharya (Nadadur Ammal) describes Lord at *Vaikuntam* as under.¹¹

“In beautiful *Vaikuntam* as bright as thousand suns resides *Sri para Vasudeva*, incarnation of pure knowledge (*gyana*), one without impurity, one with six *gunas* and character (*Gyana, Bhala, Ishwaraya, Virya, Shakti and Tejas*), Lord of *Nitya Suris*, holding conch and *chakra*, shining with beautiful apparels and ornaments, served by *Sri Devi and Bhu Devi*, residing happily on *Ananta (Adishesha)*. I pray to Him.”

2. *Vyuha*:- There are four *Vyuha* forms:-

- a) *Vasudeva Vyuha* is *Lakshmi Narayana* reclining on *Adishesha* in *kshirasagara*, with six *gunas* (character). There is no difference regarding form, character and activities between *Para* and *Vasudeva Vyuha*.
- b) *Sankarshana Vyuha* with two characters (*Gyana* and *Bhala*) is concerned with destruction, preparation of *shastras*.
- c) *Pradyumna Vyuha* with two characters (*Ishwarya* and *Virya*) is concerned with creation and establishing *dharma*.
- d) *Aniruddha Vyuha* with two characters (*sakti* and *Tejas*) is concerned with protection, teaching of divine principles.

3. *Vibhava* : The avatars of the Lord on this earth, viz., *Matsya, kurma, Sri Rama, Sri Krishna, Narasimha*, etc., are the *Vibhava* forms. This is meant for specific activity. Some times, Lord through his special powers, enters some persons viz., *Bhagvan Vyasa, Sage Kapila*, etc. This is also a form of *Vibhava Avatar*. To clarify *Vedas*, He enters *Bhagavan Vyasa*

11. "Paratwadi Panchaka Stuthi" of Vatsa Varadacharya translated into kannada by Sri. A. Ananta Narasimhachar (Ananta Prakasana).

and brings out Brahma Sutras for the benefit of man. There are in all 39 Vibhava forms.

4. *Antaryami* : Vatsya Varadacharya describes *Antaryami* as under.

“One who lives in the four categories of life such as Devas etc., living in the middle of the universe created by Brahman : one who is present always both inside and outside of Charas (Chetana) and Acharas (Achetana), one who lives in small atom size objects in a form smaller than that and in big objects in a form bigger than that, one who is seated in the hearts of yogis (those meditating) in a size of their thumb; I bow to that lord.”

This is the form God resides in every individual in the universe both inside and outside. This includes ‘*Achit*’ (non sensuous) and ‘*Chit*’ (Sensuous) covering Devas, man, insects etc. He has no relation to the action and fruits of the individual. In the souls of the size of an atom, He will be smaller than that and resides there. Similarly, in large size things, He will be bigger than that. In this way, He resides both inside and outside.

Yogis who mediate on God realise Him in their heart. Hence, this form is also called ‘*Harda*’. Whoever does meditation or mental worship (Manasika puja), *Antaryami* accepts them.

As *Antaryami*, God is everywhere and in everything. A devotee may desire to realise God in his heart in a particular form or in a form with some particular quality or characteristics. To fulfil the desire of a devotee, God will appear in his heart in that form. This form of the Lord is called ‘*Antaryami Avatara*’.¹²

At the time of death of a person, *Antaryami* helps the soul to come out through *Murdhanya Nadi* (Top of head) and escorts him to vaikuntam.

12. This brings out the importance of a personal God, as realised by Saint Thyagaraja, Purandaradasa, Kanakadasa, etc. The Lord residing as ‘*Antaryami*’ is the one to help us during our life. It is He who receives our prayers done mentally, including Manasika Aradhana. Hence, everyone should have a personal God in the form of *Antaryami Avatara*. He is to be remembered before taking food (as He will purify it). He is a source of help in all acts.

5. **Archa form:** The Lord, for the sake of His devotees and also as per their desire resides in idols. This is Archavathara. The idols installed in Temples are His Archa forms. Thus, for devotees in this world, Lord is realised only through Archa forms. In this form, he receives prayers and worship from His devotees and also blesses them. Devotees also do Saranagathi to the Lord in Archa form.

There are 106 places where Alvars have prayed to the Archa forms of the Lord installed at these places and have realised God. They have given vivid description of the Lord in their works (Divya Prabhandam).

Archa forms are classified as Swayamvyakta, Daiva, Aarsha and Manusha.

- a) *Swayamvyakta* - God to bless His devotees decides to reside in a few Archa forms. These are called 'Swayamvyakta' Archa murthy. The 'Saligramam' worshipped at home and temples comes under this category. A few others are Tirupathi Srinivasa, Ranganatha of Srirangam, Badri narayana of Badrinath, Tirunarayana of Melkote, Jagannath of Puri.
- b) *Daiva* - In some places, Devas have installed an Archa murthy. They are called 'Daiva'. Lord Krishna's Archa murthy at Guruvayur was installed by two Devas-Guru and Vayu.
- c) *Aarsha* - In some places, Sages have installed an Archa murthy. They are called 'Aarsha'. For example, Uppaliappan koil near Kumbakonam.
- d) *Manusha* - The idols installed by men and consecrated according to Agamma Sastras are called 'Manusha'.

Lord resides in all the Archa forms with His full complement of qualities or character. He receives prayers from the devotees and blesses them. Archa forms of the Lord have substantial 'Aura' around them. This increases with prayer and worship.

4.6 Pancha Samskara

There are five purificatory ceremonies which one should go through to become a Srivaishnava. These five purificatory ceremonies are called *Pancha Samskara* and are performed through an Acharya. One is not born as a srivaishnava. It is purificatory ceremonies that make one a Srivaishnava. Hence, it is an important ritual or ceremony in the life of a srivaishnava. The name 'Iyengar' (Iyindu Angagal ullavan) or (Iyindu Karyangal Ullavan) associated with a Srivaishnava derives its name from this ritual.

The five ceremonies are :

(i) *Embossing the impressions of conch (sanka) and wheel (chakra) on the left and right arms by an Acharya (Thapa Samskara).*

According to Srivaishnavism, all individuals are subordinate to the Lord. As a token of this, we identify ourselves through a symbol of the Lord (just as christians wear cross). The Lord holds in his right hand a wheel (chakra) known as *Sudarshana*. Similarly, the Lord holds in his left hand the conch known as '*Panchajanya*'. Hence, we emboss the impression of *Sudarshana* (Chakra) in the right hand and the impression of '*Panchajanya*' (conch) in the left hand.

The Acharya after prayers invoke the Lord and his weapons (*Sudharshana* and *Panchajanya*) to be present in the fire. He (Acharya) specially prays to *Sudharshana* and *Panchajanya* to be eternally present in the individual under going *Pancha Samskara*. The emblem of *Sudharshana* (chakra) is heated in the fire and embossed on the right hand, chanting the following hymn :

"Sudharsana Mahajwala! Koti Surya Sama Prabha |

Agyananda Sya Me deva Vishnormargam Pradarsaya ||

(Oh! Flamy Sudarsana as lustrous as crores of sun, please show me, an ignorant one, the path of Lord Vishnu)

Afterwards, the emblem of '*Panchajanya*' is heated in the fire and embossed on the left hand chanting the following hymn :

"Panchajanya Nijadwana Dvastapataka Sanchya |

Pahimaam papinam Ghora Samsamava Pathinam | |"

(Oh! Panchajanya! you are capable of driving away the sins of individuals through your sound. please protect me, a sinner, from this samsara).

The soul of an individual, when it reaches vaikunta, gets also a celestial body with four hands, holding sankha, chakra, etc. Thus the powers of *Sudharsana* and *Panchajanya* are already inherent in every individual. The Acharya through embossing as above, activates this power. Further the individual after Panchasamskara should preserve this power by chanting the hymns given above with Anjali Mudra near the hands. (The text of the hymns in Devanagari script is given elsewhere in the book).

In Ahobila mutt, the procedure is much simpler as the emblems of Sanka and chakra were given directly by Lord Lakshmi nara Simha to Adivan Satagopan.

(ii) *Wearing twelve Srivaishnava marks on the body (reciting appropriate names of the Lord) as taught by the Acharya (Pundra Samskara).*

The Srivaishnava concept is that our body resembles a temple. The Lord resides along with his consort, in *Vyuha* and *upavyuha* forms in different parts of our body. The Srivaishnava marks are only external display of the *upavyuha* forms of the Lord. This is known as *Pundra Samskara*. The location of marks, the name of upavyuha form of the Lord and name of Consort is as under :

Part of body	name of Lord (upavyuha form)	Name of Consort
Face	Om Kesavaaya namah	Om sriyai namah
Lower abdomen (middle)	Narayanaaya namah	Amruthodhba yai namah
Chest	Madhavaya namah	Kamalayai namah
Front neck (middle)	Govindaya namah	Chandrasobinyi namah
Lower abdomen(right)	Vishnavae namah	Harivallabhayai namah
Right arm	Madusudhanaya namah	Vishnupathnyai namah
Neck (right side)	Trivikramaya namah	Vaishnavyai namah
Lower abdomen (left)	Vamanaya namah	Vararohai namah
Left arm	Sridharaya namah	Shargnai namah

Neck (left side)	Hrishikeshaya namah	Deva Devikayai namah
Back (lower spinal)	Padma nabhaya namah	Mahalaxmai namah
Back (upper spiral)	Damodaraya namah	Surasundaryai namah
Top of head	Vasudevaya namah	Sarvabhista phala pradai namah

There are twelve upavyaha forms of the Lord, Starting from Kesava. The upavyuha forms of the Lord is supposed to represent the twelve suns in the universe corresponding to twelve zodiacs of the universe. Our body is formed out of prakriti which also forms the body of the Lord. Thus, our body is also linked to the body of the Lord. The upavyuha forms of the Lord reside in various parts of our body. We salute him by reciting his name with Anjali mudra at the appropriate part of our body, as given above. The form of the Lord in upavyuha forms for meditation is as under :

Upavyuha form	form of Lord for meditation ¹³			
Kesava	The Lord with Chakra in all the four hands			
Narayana	"	"	Conch	" "
Madhava	"	"	Mace	" "
Govinda	"	"	Bow	" "
Vishnu	"	"	Plough	" "
Madusudana	"	"	Pounding rod	" "
Trivikrama	"	"	Sword	" "
Vamana	"	"	Thunder bolt	" "
Sridhara	"	"	axe	" "
Hrishiksha	"	"	crow-bar	" "
Padmanabha	The Lord with eight arms holding all weapons.			
Damodara	The Lord with whip in all the four hands.			

[Note : Even if one does not wear the Srivaishnava marks, Salutations to the Lord should be done at these places].

13. Some forms of Achit or prakriti, such as mahat, ahamkara, tanmatras etc., are supposed to be the constituents of the weapons of the Lord. During pralaya these forms of Achit merge with the weapons.

(iii) *Adding 'Dasa' to his name (Nama Samskara)*

In token of his subordination to the Lord and Sri Ramanuja, the individual receives the name 'Dasa' to be added at the end of his name. In this way, he will be constantly reminded of his subordination to the Lord.

(iv) *Learning from the Acharya the three Sri Vaishnava mantras (Mantra Samskara)*

The individual learns the three Srivaishnava mantras-Ashtakshara, Dvaya and charamasloka - with their invocatory slokas (Dhyana slokas). As already discussed in chapter I. this is the most important samskara. This should be performed with full devotion. The three Rahasya thraya mantras have been discussed separately. Generally the Acharya performs this samskara in the presence of the Archa form of the Lord through whom he has achieved God-realisation.

(v) *Learning of Aradhana or worship of God (Yaga Samskara).*

The *Aradhana* is a form of worship of the Lord through various courtesies. There are two forms of worship - namely internal (Manasika) and external (Bahya). This has been discussed separately. The Acharya at the time of Panchasamskara, initiates this samskara through the following verses :

स्वा चांतः सोर्ध्वपुण्ड्रः प्रणमनमजिनाद्यासनं सासुयामः। सांगन्यासो
जपस्यात्हृदयकमलके मानसी देवपूजा। वामस्थं वारिपात्रंकुसुममितरतश्चान्यदग्रेऽर्घ्यपाद्ये
स्नानीयाचाममर्घ्याद्भरितनुकुसुम स्वात्मनां प्रोक्षणं स्यात्॥

[After Achamanam, wearing Sri vaishnava marks, prostrating to the Lord, sit in a seat. After pranayamam, perform Japam with Dhyana slokas (Ashtakshara etc.). Later worship the Lord in your heart. Then with water from the vessel placed left (of God), Sprinkle water on flowers, and other materials for worship and also vessels for Arghyam, Padyam, etc. From water in Arghya Vessel sprinkle water on flowers etc (for worship) and also self].

आह्वानं चासनार्घ्यम् पदसलिलमथाचाम पुंसूक्तयुक्त स्नानं। वस्त्रोपवीते मलयज
कुसुमे धूप-दीपौ क्रमेण। मध्वाधिः पर्क आदावुपरिच सलिलं पायसाद्यन्न जातं।
पानीयाचामपूगं परिगतिनमनोद्वासनंविष्णुपूजा॥

[After welcoming the Lord, offer Arghyam, Padyam, Achamaniam, give ritualistic bath. Then offer cloth, sacred thread (Yagno Pavitha), Sandal paste, flower, incence, light, in order. Offer Achamanam, honey and again Achamanam. Later offer food comprising of pudding, rice, vegetables, water, pan-betel etc. After prostration restoring status quo is the procedure of worship of Vishnu].

The details of Aradhanam has been discussed separately.

4.7. SAMASHRAYANAM

Samashrayanam is the ceremony by which one gets Pancha Samskara. An individual approaches an Acharya and makes a request. The Acharya after pujas and homam will perform the Pancha Samskara. The Acharya also explains the practice for Saranagathi briefly. Any one who wants to become a Sri Vaishnava is eligible for Samashrayanam, irrespective of caste, creed or sex.

4.8. RAHASYA THRAYA

The three Sri Vaishnava Mantras - Ashtakshara, Dvayam and Charama sloka - are known as Rahasya thraya. Rahasya means 'Mantra'. Rahasya thraya means three mantras. A mantra is a hymn or prayer (with words and alphabets specially chosen) addressed to God or deity. It is supposed to possess mystic and super natural powers. Scientifically speaking, when a person meditates or chants a Mantra, he attracts Bio-energy or pranic energy from the surroundings. This helps in improvement of body and mental health. The mantras forming Rahasya thraya also have this potential.

Sri Vedanta Desika considers Rahasya thraya as 'Saratama'. That is, essence of all essential knowledge for *Saranagathi* or *Moksha*. 'Ashtakshara' conveys the pleasure of an individual (Soul) being sesha (part) of the Lord (*Seshi*), and thus reveals the form of himself and the Lord. The chanting of this mantra earns the grace of the Lord, establishes bondage and qualifies or creates an environment for one to surrender (or do *saranagathi*) to the Lord. *Dvayam* is the Mantra by which one surrenders (or do *Saranagathi*) to the Lord. The *charama Sloka* is the words of the Lord himself assuring protection to those who have surrendered. One may ask how to surrender or do *saranagathi*?

There is a set procedure for the performance of the various vedic rituals - For example, homam is performed in fire, Arghyam is given through water, etc. In so far as Saranagathi is concerned, it is performed through mantras or hymns. Thus, the chanting of Rahasya thraya Mantras is saranagathi itself. Hence, they should be chanted with full devotion:

Sri Vedanta Desika has discussed at great length the three Srivaishnava Mantras in his Rahasya thrayasara. A few essential points are discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

Ashtakshara

- (i) ओं नमो नारायणाय (*Om Namō Narayanaya*) is the *Ashtakshara* Mantra. It derives its name as there are eight alphabets in the mantra. As it conveys the essence of Srivaishnavism, it is also called as "*Moola Mantra*".
- (ii) This mantra connotes comprehensively the essence of vedas and smritis (Commentary by sages on veda). The power of this mantra is extolled by sages, Alwars and many others. Statements such as ओं नमो नारायणेति मनोपासकः वैकुण्ठ भुवनलोकं गमिष्यति। (Chanter of *Om Namō Narayanaya* goes to *Vaikuntam*), brings out the power and merit of this mantra. Sri Vedanta Desika quoting Narada's words, says -

व्यक्तं हि भगवान् देवः साक्षात् नारायणः स्वयं। अष्टक्षरस्वरूपेण मुखेषु परिवर्तते ॥

(Lord *Sriman Narayana* presents himself (travels) in the form of *Ashtakshara* on the face of those who meditate through this mantra). Thus, the chanting of this mantra enables the presence of the Lord.
- (iii) The first word is '*Om*' or '*Pranava*'. This itself is a one word mantra, and to be chanted in three mathras (seconds) duration for God realisation. The *pranava* comprises of three alphabets, namely '*Aa*', '*Uu*' and '*Mm*'. '*Aa*' denotes *vishnu*; '*Uu*' denotes goddess *Lakshmi* and '*Mm*' denotes soul or *Jeevathma*.
- (iv) The words '*Namah*' and '*Narayanaya*' contain the essence and potential

of the mantra. '*Namah*' means 'not mine' or 'not for me' and thus indicates the subordination or surrender of the soul to paramatma. The word '*Narayana*' brings out the relationship of *Atman* and *Paramatman*. It points out that Narayana is the Eshwara referred to in vedas to whom all chits and achits are subordinate and constitute his body. The power and potential of this word is brought out thus :

संकीर्त्य नारायणं शब्दमात्रं विमुक्तदुःखः सुखिनो भवन्ति॥

(utterance of word Narayana, removes one of all misery and gives him happiness).

- (v) There are number of mantras to propitiate Lord Vishnu. Amongst these, Ashtakshara is considered the best because:
- (a) It is the essence of all vedas
 - (b) It is capable of warding off all sins.
 - (c) It facilitates bondage between the individual and the Lord for Saranagathi.
 - (d) It can be chanted either in vedic form or non vedic form to suit all varnas (castes).
 - (e) It explains the three Srivaishnava tatwas (realities).
 - (f) It gives all benefits that one can derive from different mantras.
 - (g) It is applicable to all forms of the Lord like Para, Vyuha, Archa etc.
 - (h) It is this mantra by which sages meditated to realise God.
 - (i) It is this mantra that Alwars and others have emphasised for Moksha.
- (vi) '*Om namo Narayanaya*' is vedic in character and Brahmins are eligible to chant this form.
- '*Am namo Narayanaya*' is semi vedic in character, and Kshatriyas and

ladies are eligible to chant this form and derive the same benefits. "Namo Narayana" and "Namo Narayanaya" are non-vedic in character and can be chanted by one and all including vaishyas and Sudras.

- (vii) This mantra was taught to Pundarika through Narada. Tirumangai Alwar received the mantra directly from the Lord.

This mantra originated from Badrinarayana of Badrinath, chanted in Gayathri chandas and addressed to the deity Srīman Narayana.

- (viii) This Mantra is chanted as a single sentence or two sentences or three sentences, connoting different meanings with different results;

- a) When chanted as a single sentence it conveys

i) Means to achieve.

ii) Service of subordination.

- b) When chanted as two sentences, it conveys

i) Self-realization.

ii) Saranagathi.

iii) Moksha.

- c) When chanted as three sentences, it conveys -

i) Self-realization and Moksha

ii) Self-realization and realization of desires and warding off troubles.

(iii) Saranagathi and Moksha

(iv) Self-realization and Moksha.

It is said that this Mantra is equivalent to reciting all Vedas. Chanting this with devotion and deep trust, the benefits are immense. The dyana sloka for this mantra is addressed to Srīman Narayana (para form of God), who is also the presiding deity for this mantra.

DVAYAM

"*Sriman Narayana Charanau. sharanam Prapadey, Srimate Narayanaya Namah*" is the *Dvaya Mantra*. As there are two sentences, it is called 'Dvayam'. This is a '*Tantrika*' *Mantra*. Hence, all can recite it, without any restriction. This Mantra helps to do Saranagathi in Lakshmi Narayana. Sri Ramanuja's '*Saranagathi Gadya*' is an elaborate explanation of Dvayam. Though there are eight words, while reciting, it will be six words only. In consideration of its deep meaning and non restriction, this mantra is considered unique and is termed '*Mantra Ratna*' - Jewel amongst mantras.

The first part conveys saranagathi or surrender. The second part conveys the subordination of Jeevathmam to paramatman. This is the mantra by which one does saranagathi.

There are no restrictions of any kind viz., place, time, caste, sex etc., for reciting it. One of the tenets of Sri Ramanuja is to chant this mantra as often as possible (Whenever one gets time).

Charama sloka

"*Sarva dharman Parithyajya Maam Ekam Saranam Vraja, Aham thuwa Sarva Papebhyo Mokshayishyami Maa Shuchah*" is the *Charama sloka*. This is what Sri Krishna finally told Arjuna and hence called '*Charama Sloka*' (meaning as a last resort). Shri Krishna Himself has suggested that Saranagathi is the easiest and best approach to Moksha. Charama Sloka brings out the fruits of Saranagathi.

Here "*Dharma*" refers to difficult process of Bhakti Yoga. Saranagathi does not give exemption to dharman prescribed for any varna (caste), including duties to the society. Same is the case with duties towards parents.

A saranagathi will continue his duties of his varna even after saranagathi. Saranagathi helps to cross '*Samsara*', but it will not relieve one from the duties of his *varnashrama*.

Lord Krishna told this sloka to Arjuna in the middle of the battle field.

Philosophically, life of every individual is a battle field. Further, Arjuna represents mankind and not an individual. Hence,, this sloka is the message of the Lord for the mankind.

We have discussed briefly the three Mantras essential for any Saranagatha. These are to be recited with devotion everyday, after saluting one's Acharya (Tanian) and Acharya parampara.

4.9. HOW TO DO SARANAGATHI?

There are three modes by which one can do Saranagathi.

- 1) Swanishte - One who has a) full knowledge of the requirements for Saranagathi, b) realised God - like Alwars, Sri Ramanuja etc., can do Saranagathi directly to Lord. This is *Swanishte*.
- 2) Uktinishte - One who cannot do '*Swanishte*', should approach an Acharya or teacher and request him to guide for performing Saranagathi. The Acharya in the presence of the Archa Murthy of the Lord through whom he has achieved God-realization, recites sentences conveying full surrender (prapatti) in such a way the Lord understands. These sentences uttered by the Acharya is repeated by the individual. This is called '*Uktinishte*' Saranagathi.
- 3) Acharya Nishte - One who cannot do any of the above methods, will surrender to the Acharya himself. Out of compassion for the individual the Acharya prays to the Archa Murthy (through whom he has achieved God-realization) and requests the Lord to take the protection of the individual. This is called '*Acharya Nishte*' Saranagathi. The Acharya has to do this for each individual separately.

For Moksha, Saranagathi is essential. All the modes of Saranagathi are equal. Average individuals have to approach an Acharya. Saranagathi is done only once in the life time of an individual.

At the time of Saranagathi for Moksha, one can also pray to God that he should be protected against *Baghavat* and *Bhagavat apachara* (insult go God and devotees of God) during the remaining period of the present life

span. God will help to remove the 'Prarabhada' karmas responsible for this act. If not done at the time of original Saranagathi, a separate Saranagathi is subsequently made.

A person approaches an acharya and performs saranagathi as above. Is it adequate? In Saranagathi Deepika, Sri Vedanta Desika says :

दत्ताः प्रजाः जनकवत् तव देशिकेन्द्रैः
पत्याभिनंद्य भवता परिणीयमानाः।
मध्ये सतां महितभोग-विशेषसिद्ध्यै
मांगल्यसूत्रमिव बिभ्रति किंकरत्वं॥

[Just as Janaka (who married Seetha to you) great Acharyas have married chetanas to you after your acceptance. These chetanas to experience great pleasures (with you in vaikuntam) are wearing symbols of saranagathi (such as Rahasya thraya mantras) as if it is mangalyam (an ornament tied by husband to wife in token of marriage) in the midst of noble people].

Sri Vedanta Desika says that Saranagathi is marriage of Jeevatman and Paramatman performed by the acharya. Just as in regular marriage, the wife after marriage is thinking about her husband and eager to join him., the same is true of saranagathi also. The Jeevathma joins Paramatma at the end of the present life. Therefore, the Jeevathma has to be constantly thinking of paramatman during the tenure of the present life. The Jeevathman does this through meditation of the Lord through Rahasya thraya mantras. One of Ramanuja's tenets is to chant *Dvayam* whenever time is available - waiting in bus stand, travelling etc. Scholars have written a number of articles bringing out the similarity of saranagathi and the traditional marriage.

Thus, eventhough the saranagathi is done only once in our life time on one particular day, it has to be kept alive by Meditating on the Lord through mantras forming Rahasya thraya.

4.10. DAILY ROUTINE OF A SRI VAISHNAVA

After Pancha Samskara, one becomes a Sri Vaishnava. In the various purificatory ceremonies, the Acharya introduces an individual to a) Sudharsana

and Panchajanya through embossing Chakra and Sanka, b) Twelve Upavyuha forms of the Lord through twelve Sri Vaishnava marks, c) Para form of the Lord through Ashtakshara, d) Vyuha form of the Lord through Dvayam, e) Vibhava form of the Lord through Charama sloka, f) Archa form of the Lord through Bahya Aradhana (external worship), g) Antaryami Avatara form through manasika Aradhana (internal). The Pancha Samskara takes place only once in the life of an individual and hence the daily routine of a Sri Vaishnava should include steps for strengthening the initiative given by the Acharya. In our everyday life we see that acquaintances bloom into friendship and attachment through constant meetings and interactions. In the same way, the constant thinking of the Lord by the individual also helps to enhance the bondage. This constant thinking of the Lord by the individual is called '*Japam*' or meditation. Hence, every Sri Vaishnava should reserve sometime everyday for meditation. Let us see the routines required under each of the ceremonies.

1. **Dasa :** Acharya gives the individual the name 'Dasa'. The individual should always feel that he is a subordinate of God. He should develop humility and kindness. He should develop a quality of head and heart that promotes 'Dasathwa' in all his activities including reciting of mantras. A prayer to Sri Ramanuja will help him in this regard.
2. **Impressions of Conch and Chakra :** Conch and Chakra represent Panchajanya and Sudarsana. They alone can show the path to God. Hence, one should pray to them for dispelling ignorance and show the path to God. The verses for prayer are given in Appendix I.¹⁴ The verses are chanted with Anjali Mudra near right and left hands.
3. There are twelve Upavyuha forms of the Lord starting from Sri kesava etc. The Upavyuha forms of the Lord is supposed to represent the twelve suns in the universe corresponding to twelve Zodiacs of the universe. These forms of the lord is for meditation of the devotees. Our body is formed out of Prakriti which forms also the body of the Lord. Thus, our body is also linked to the body of the Lord. The upavyuha

14. Appendix 1 gives the general practice for meditation. There may be some minor variations in the practices of various institutions. It will not be difficult for any individual to incorporate these changes.

forms of the Lord reside in various parts of our body. The Sri Vaishnava marks we wear is only an external display of the Upavyuha forms of the Lord. We salute Him by reciting His name with Anjali mudra near the corresponding part of our body. The details are given in Appendix I.

4. **Rahasya thraya Mantras** : God should be meditated upon by reciting the three Mantras - namely Ashtakshara, Dvaya and Charma sloka. The dyana sloka and other details are given in Appendix I. Before reciting dhyana slokas, one should do (a) Ashtakshara Pranayamam (b) Sankalpa (expression of intension) (c) Submission of the fruits of meditation to Lord himself.

Ashtakshara Pranayamam - close the left nostril with ring finger, and exhale from the right nostril (Rechaka), close the right nostril with thumb and take in air from left nostril after releasing ring finger (Puraka). Close the left nostril also as before. In this way the air is held inside the body. While holding the air inside the body, recite mentally Ashtakshara 10 times or 18 or 28 times according to one's capacity to hold breath. After reciting, release air from right nostril. This is Ashtakshara Pranayamam and it helps to tune our system for meditation.

During Ashtakshara Pranayamam, the right hand will be regulating the respiration. The left hand should be used for counting with palm facing skywards. The chakras at the tip of fingers and palm of the left hand absorb Bio-energy from the surroundings. This also helps in respiratory control during pranayamam.

While meditating on the Lord through Rahasya thraya mantras, the mantras should be recited mentally (that is, the tongue, lips and teeth should not partake in chanting).

The vedic approach has been that our planet (earth) is a part of the universe and the systems of the universe have influence on the life in our planet. The actions and activities of human beings have been so oriented as to derive maximum benefits for the individual and also for the society through these influences. The human thought is a form of energy. It is considered to be

of high frequency type. It also has properties of transmission, resonance, etc. like high frequency waves. When we pluck a string in a violin or a tambura, the sound is the result of resonance in the air column in these instruments. The meditation, pranayamam are very akin to this phenomena and hence considered very important in Vedic tenets.

- 5) **Aradhana** - (Bhaya or External puja) - This is worshipping an Archa form of the Lord. The procedure followed is according to '*Nitya Grantha*' of Sri Ramanuja. It commences with '*Suprabhatam*' - that is, waking up of the Lord; then '*Mantrasana*' - that is, washing the hands and feet of the Lord; *Snanasana* - bath and change of dress; *Alankarasana* - decorating the Lord with sandal paste, doopam etc. and worshipping the feet of the Lord with flowers; '*Bhojyasana*' Serving of food, fruits and betel; again '*Mantrasana* - that is, washing hands and feet and placing one's request (Shatummorai) and concludes with '*Paryankasanam*' - that is, requesting the Lord to retire and rest. The above is briefly the procedure of '*Bahya Aradhanam*' that is, external puja. There are a number of books on this subject. However, a brief method is given in Appendix II.

The external worship is to be done generally in the morning. On special occasions like Janmashtami, Sri Ramanavami and Narasimha Jayanthi, the Bahya Aradhanam is to be performed at midnight, noon and at sunset respectively. Though the Bahya Aradhana is performed by males only of the three Varanas, ladies also have a role to play. By assisting the male members of the family in this activity, they also get the benefits of Bahya Aradhana. Likewise, the fourth Varna can also get the benefits of Bahya Aradhana by assisting those performing the Aradhana.

6. **Manasika Aradhana** or Meditation of the Lord ¹⁵ - Suka, while narrating Bhagavatham to King Parikshit, mentions how great devotees used to worship the Lord within their hearts.

a) These devotees meditate on the Lord with His four hands holding

15. '*Bhagavat divya Mangala murthy dhyana mattu Mangalashasana*' by Sri A. Ananta Narasimhachar (Ananta Prakasana).

Conch, Chakra, Gadha and Lotus. They fix His figure firmly in their mind.

- b) Having fixed His figure firmly, they worship Him with all the courtesies (as in Bahya Aradhana or Puja) including serving of food, mentally.
- c) They conclude the worship with Mangalasasanam (Mangalarathi).

This procedure narrated By Suka can be practised by anyone irrespective of caste, place or sex. Also there are no time restrictions and hence this can be done at anytime when one finds some leisure. Meditation as above for a few moments will bring great happiness and mental tranquility. The format of Appendix II may be used suitably.

The Bahya Aradhana is performed by one member of the family. The others play only a supporting role by assisting. On the other hand, all have to perform Manasika Aradhana.

Thus, the daily routines of a Sri Vaishnava should include a few moments of meditation covering the various ceremonies of Pancha Samskara as detailed above.

Nitya Karmas (Sandyavandanam, etc.) and Naimithikka Karmas (bread earning for the family, upanayanam and marriage of children, service to parents and elders and other family duties) are prescribed in the Vedas and they should not be neglected. God will not accept service from those who neglect the nitya and naimithikka karmas. Thus, Sri Vaishnavism promotes God-realisation within the frame work of worldly activities of individuals. *There is an impression amongst a few that Pancha Samskara may interfere with their professional and other activities. This is not true. Even after Pancha Samskara, the individual will continue his activities as before, except for including a few moments everyday on meditation discussed earlier. This may gradually bring a change for improvement in the quality of his life including his profession.*

Thus, an individual devoting each day a few minutes in the performance of

- a) Sandyavandanam @ Sunrise and Sunset.

- b) **Meditation through Rahasya thraya Mantras (Appendix I)**
- c) **Manasika Aradhana.**

will derive immense benefits. These few moments of Association of the individual with the Lord, will give him not only healthy body and mind, but also improvement in all walks of life.

Within his ability, a Sri Vaishnava should help the birthday celebration of his Acharya and Acharya parampara, maintaining his Acharya's ashram, maintenance of a temple of his choice, assistance to Sri Vaishnava Bhagavatas, etc.

Sri Ramanuja has given the following commandments to all Srivaishnavas.

- 1) Grieve not over your present life as it is the result of your past Karmas.
- 2) Read repeatedly the books dealing with the glory of God or his devotees.
- 3) Enjoy the utterance of the name of God and His devotees.
- 4) One who renders service to God's devotees will attain God speedily.
- 5) Devote everyday sometime to utter the name of God and your Acharyas. Inculcate the qualities of Dhaya, Kshama, Soushilya, Vatsalya (qualities which the Lord bestows on us).
- 6) Treat every Sri Vaishnava as you would treat your Acharya.
- 7) Let not the performance of your duties including profession (job) and others be regarded as a means for achieving worldly ends but consider it as service rendered to the Supreme Being.
- 8) Having surrendered, throw all your burdens on God or your Acharya. Recite and contemplate Dvaya Mantra as often as possible.
- 9) Partake (or at least support) in propagation of Saranagathi.
- 10) Spend your lives in the service done to the Lord in the sacred places (Temple) on earth (or atleast give support to run the temples).
- 11) All merciful Lord is always ready to help you.

- 12) If nothing is possible, atleast seek a Sri Vaishnava who is full of wisdom, devotion and desireless and move with him in such a way that he may be kind towards you.

(In the light of discussion on 'Aura' in Chapter I, association is very important. Any association involves intermixing of Auras of participants).

4.11 PATH TO MOKSHA¹⁶

For one who has made Saranagathi, he will get Moksha after the life span of the present cycle of birth. The soul comes out of '*Brahma Nadi*' (as the remaining 100 nadis are outlets for re-birth) with the help of Antaryami God. The soul is carried by twelve Ativahakas¹⁷ in the Devayana or Archiradi path beyond the limits of prakriti and upto the entry of Viraja river. One of the Ativahaka, named Vydhyuta will accompany him till he (soul) reaches the Lord at Vaikuntam. The Mukhta, once he crosses the boundaries of Nature or Prakriti and reaches Viraja river will lose his subtle body also. He crosses the Viraja river. Then he gets a celestial body resembling Paramatman himself with four hands and pure satwa qualities. Only after crossing Viraja river, he enters Vaikuntam. This is known as '*Salokya*' *mukti*, i.e., same world as that of the Lord. Getting celestial body is called '*Sarootpya*' *mukti*, i.e., same form as the Lord. He moves with his celestial body in the Vaikuntam and acquires various celestial qualities. He will be received by Mukhtas and Nitya Suris, praising his various services and introducing themselves. He will be taken near two Dwarapalakas, namely *Indra* and *Prajapathi*. There he will be honoured by Nitya Suris and taken inside. Then he enters the hall where the Lord (Shriyapathi) Himself will receive him. At that time, the Mukhta will see the Para form of the Lord not seen by him before. Then he prostrates at the feet of the Lord praying that he should be blessed to experience the Lord's Para form uninterruptedly. This is '*Samipya*' *mukti* i.e., proximity. Then Lord grants him

16. Paramartha Stuti by Vatsa Varadacharya, Kannada translation by Sri Ananta Narasimhachar (Ananta Prakasana).

17. 1) Agni 2) Ahas (daylight) 3) Sukla PAKSHA 4) Uttarayana 5) Samvatsara 6) Vayu 7) Sun 8) Moon 9) Lightning (Vydhyuta) 10) Varuna 11) Indra 12) Brahma.

happiness and comforts similar to His own. He later takes Jeevathma on his lap. This is 'Sayugya' Mukti or complete merging. This is Moksha.

Vatsa Varadacharya has beautifully summarised the process from birth to Moksha in two verses as under :

1. *(A person) by association with Bhagavathas loses interest in worldly things; surrenders to Srīman Narayana through an Acharya; realises himself; experiences prarabhdha karma without much agony; get other karmas (Agami and Sanchaya) warded off; grace of the Lord through Saranagathi helps to cut off the effects of Maya (cycle of births); through the grace of Antaryami, (Atman) comes out of Madyanadi (Sushma nadi).*
2. *The atman freed thus receives honour from (Ativahakas) Agni, presiding deities of day, Suklapaksha, Uttarayana, Samvatsara; Vayu, Sun, Moon, Vidyut, Varuna, Indra and Prajapathi and crosses the boundary of nature and Viraja river; reaches vaikuntam eternally with Satwa character. The fortunate Atman there gets full association of Paramatman and enjoys equally with Him.*

4.12 Sandya Vandanam

Sandyavandanam is a basic daily routine. This should be performed everyday three times, during Sandya periods. The Japam, Aradhanam given earlier is to be performed only after Sandyavandanam.

Those who have gone through Pancha Samskara, must perform 'Ashtakshara' Japam also after 'Gayathri Japam' (before upastahanam) during Sandyavandanam. The count for Ashtakshara Japam should be same as that of Gayathri. Both these mantras are addressed to the 'Para' form of God.

CHAPTER V.

CONCLUSION

This is briefly the Srivaishnavism. The God is all merciful. He gave Vedas to help all individuals to get Moksha. It was Ramanuja who gave the path of love and saranagathi for God-realisation. Any one irrespective of birth can realise God through Saranagathi. This message Ramanuja spread during his life time and promoted Srivaishnavism.

¹⁸A great scholar named Yajnamurthy was promoting the theory of Maya when Sri Ramanuja was promoting Vishishtadvaita. He had defeated all scholars by virtue of his knowledge and his ability to argue. He challenged Sri Ramanuja for discussion. The arguments went on for several days and Sri Ramanuja could not pierce his arguments. Desperately Sri Ramanuja prayed to Lord Varada, "Oh! Lord! in the past Sri Vaishnava scriptures has enabled many to attain your lotus feet. Today they are overpowered by Mayavada and it is difficult to pierce it. Oh! Lord! how long will you keep your children away from your lotus feet." In the night Lord Varada appeared to Sri Ramanuja in the dream and asked him to continue and he will bring glory to the path of love and devotion. Next day, Sri Ramanuja went to Yagna murthy to continue the arguments. Yajnamurthy when he saw Sri Ramanuja said, "O, noble one! your path of love and devotion to realise and attain God is supreme and all my knowledge is but a straw before it. It has taught me only Ego. Please accept me as your disciple". Sri Ramanuja was not surprised as he knew it was all the grace of Lord Varada. Thus, God will not allow his wards or devotees to be humiliated during their life time. Later Ramanuja entrusted Yagna murthy the work of explaining veda mantras on the principles of Srivaishnavism.

If Sri Vaishnavism is what it is today, it is entirely due to the tireless

18. This episode is taken from 'Life of Ramanuja' by Swami Rama Krishnananda, Sri Rama Krishna Math, Myslapore, Madras-4.

effort of Sri Ramanuja. He had the interest of mankind in his heart. His promotion of Srivaishnavism enabled even ordinary people to realise God. His concept of this world as God's 'Leelavibhuti' and the three simple Srivaishnava mantras for God realisation is indeed unique. Let us salute him by chanting his Tanian and conclude this discussion.

यो नित्यम् अच्युत पदांभुज युग्म रुक्म
व्यामोहतः तदितराणि तृणाय मेने।
अस्मद्गुरोः भगवतोस्य दयैक-सिन्धोः
रामानुजस्य चरणौ शरणं प्रपद्ये॥

SRI KRISHNARPANA MASTU

APPENDIX I

PROCEDURE FOR DAILY MEDITATION

(Note : Titles are not chanted during practice)

1. Achamanam (2 times as in Sandyavandanam)
2. Pranayamam (as in Sandyavandanam)
3. Salutations to Acharyas.
 - (a) सङ्कल्प (Sankalpa)
श्री भगवदाज्ञया श्रीमन्नारायण प्रीत्यर्थं गुरु परंपरा अनुसंदानं करिष्ये
 - (b) Tanian of the direct Acharya (Acharya who has performed Pancha Samskara and/or Bharanyasa).
 - (c) Lineage of teachers or Guruparampara (to be chanted with Anjali Mudra).

अस्मत् गुरुभ्यो नमः। अस्मत् परम गुरुभ्यो नमः।

अस्मत् सर्वगुरुभ्यो नमः। श्रीमते वेदान्त गुरवे नमः।

श्रीमते रामानुजाय नमः। श्रीमहापूर्णाय नमः।

श्रीमत् यामुनमुनये नमः। श्री राममिश्राय नमः।

श्री पुण्डरीकक्षाय नमः। श्रीमन् नाथमुनये नमः।

श्रीमते शठगोपाय नमः। श्रीमते विष्वक्सेनाय नमः।

श्रियै नमः। श्रीधरया नमः॥

अस्मत् देशिकम् अस्मदीय परमाचार्यान् अशेषान् गुरुन्

श्रीमत् लक्ष्मणयोगि पुङ्गव महापूर्णा मुनिम् यामुनम्।

रामं पद्मविलोचनं मुनिवरं नाथं शठद्वेषिणम्।

सेनेश श्रियम् इन्दिरासहचरम् नारायणं संश्रये॥

अस्मत् गुरुसमारम्भाम् यतिशेखरमध्यमाम्।

लक्ष्मीवल्लभपर्यन्तां वन्दे गुरुपरम्पराम्॥

4. Salutations to Sudharsana and Panchajanya

“सुदर्शन! महाज्वाल! कोटिसूर्य समप्रभ!।
अज्ञानान्धस्य मे देव! विष्णोर्मार्गम् प्रदर्शय॥”

(Anjali Mudra near right hand).

“पाञ्चजन्य! निजध्वान ध्वस्तपातकसञ्चय!।
पाहि मां पापिनं धोरसंसारार्णव पातिनम्॥”

(Anjali Mudra near left hand).

5. Salutations to twelve upavyuha forms of the Lord

Part of Body (Anjali Mudra)	Name of Lord	Name of Consort
Face	ओं केशवाय नमः	ओं श्रियै नमः,
Lower abdomen (middle)	नारायणाय नमः,	अमृतोद्भवायै नमः,
Chest	माधवाय नमः,	कमलायै नमः,
Front neck (middle)	गोविन्दाय नमः,	चन्द्रशोभिनी नमः,
Lower abdomen (right)	विष्णवे नमः,	हरिवल्लभायै नमः,
Right arm	मधुसूदनाय नमः,	विष्णुपत्न्यै नमः,
Neck (right side)	त्रिविक्रमाय नमः,	वैष्णव्यै नमः,
Lower abdomen (left)	वामनाय नमः,	वरारोहायै नमः,
Left arm	श्रीधराय नमः,	शार्ङ्गिण्यै नमः,
Neck (left side)	हृषीकेशाय नमः,	देवदेविकायै नमः,
Back - lower spiral	पद्मनाभाय नमः,	महालक्ष्म्यै नमः,
Back - upper spiral	दामोदराय नमः,	सुरसुन्दर्यै नमः,
Top of head	वासुदेवाय नमः,	सर्वाभीष्टफलप्रदायै नमः

6. Meditation of the Lord through Rahasya thraya mantras

(a) Sankalpa

(i) श्री भगवदाज्ञया श्रीमन्-नारायण-प्रीत्यर्थं अष्टाक्षरादि रहस्यत्रय मन्त्रजप करिष्ये।

(ii) Submission of the fruits of meditation to the Lord Himself.

भगवानेव स्वनियाम्य स्वरूपस्थितिं प्रवृत्तिं स्वशेषतैक रसेन मया
स्वकीयैश्च उपकरणैः स्वाराध्यनैक प्रयोजनाद्य परमपुरुषः सर्वशेषी

श्रियपतिः स्वशेष भूतमिदं अष्टाक्षरादि रहस्यत्रय- मन्त्रजपाख्यं कर्म
स्वस्मै स्वप्रीतये स्वयमेव कारयति

(b) Ashtakshara Mantra

(i) Ashtakshara Pranayamam

(ii) Dhyana Sloka

* सर्व्वं पादं प्रसार्य श्रितदुरितहरं दक्षिणं कुंचयित्वा
जानुन्याधाय सव्येतरमितरभुजं नागभोगे निधाय।
पश्चात् बाहुद्वयेन प्रतिभट्टशमने धारयन् शङ्खचक्रे
देवीभूषादिजुष्टो जनयतु जगतां शर्म वैकुण्ठनाथः॥

(iii) Recite Ashtakshara

ओं (अं) नमो नारायणाय (10, 28, or 108 times)

(c) Dvaya-mantra

(i) Ashtakshara Pranayamam

(ii) Dhyana Sloka

+ क्षीराम्बोनिधिरलमण्टपमहासौवर्णसिंहासने
वांमाङ्के स्थितया प्रसन्नवदनं श्रीकान्तयाऽऽलिङ्गितम्।
दोर्दण्डाङ्कितशंखपङ्कजगदा चक्रैरुदारश्रियम्
त्वां नित्यं कलयामि जन्मविमुखो लक्ष्मीश नारायण॥

(iii) Recite Dvayam

श्रीमन् नारायण चरणौ शरणं प्रपद्ये।

श्रीमते नारायणाय नमः॥

(10, 28 or 108 times)

(d) Charma Sloka

(i) Ashtakshara Pranayamam

(ii) Dhyana Sloka

यत्प्रपत्तिं विना सर्व्वैः यस्य माया दुरत्यया।

धनंजयस्थस्यं तत् प्रपद्ये शरणं महः॥

(iii) Recite Charama Sloka

सर्व्वमार्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज।

अहं त्वा सर्व्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि माशुचः॥

7. Sri Panchakshara

(i) Dhyana Sloka

कल्याणानम् + अविकलनिधिः कापि कारुण्यसीमा
नित्यामोदा निगम-वचसां मौलि-मन्दारमाला।
संपद्-दिव्या मधु-विजयिनः सन्निधत्तां सदा मे
सैषा देवी सकल-भुवन-प्रार्थना कामधेनुः॥

** (ii) श्री श्रियै नमः (Sri Panchakshara)

8. Submission of the fruits of meditation to the Lord Himself.

भगवानेव स्वनियाम्य स्वरूपस्थितिं प्रवृत्तिं स्वशेषतैक रसेन मया स्वकीयेष्ट
उपकरणैः स्वाराधनैक प्रयोजनाय परमपुरुषः सर्वशेषी श्रियपतिः स्वशेष
भूतमिदं अष्टाक्षरादि रहस्यत्रय मन्त्रजपाख्यं कर्म स्वस्मै स्वप्रीतये स्वयमेव
कारितवान्

Notes

* May also add the following :

अस्य श्रीमदष्टाक्षर महामन्त्रस्य बदरिकाश्रमवासी नारायण ऋषिः।
देवी गायत्री छन्दः। परमत्मा श्रीमन्नारायणो देवता।
अं बीजः आय शक्तिः। मं कौलकं शुक्लादिवर्णः।
स्वस्वामिभावः संबन्धः श्रीमन्नारायणप्रीत्यर्थे जपे विनियोगः॥
ओं ओं अद्भुष्टाभ्यां नमः। ओं नमः तर्जनीभ्यां नमः।
ओं नारायणाय मध्यमाभ्यां नमः। ओं ओं अनामिकाभ्यां नमः।
ओं नमः कनिष्ठिकाभ्यां नमः। ओं नारायणाय करतलकरपृष्ठाभ्यां नमः।
ओं ओं ज्ञानाय हृदयाय नमः। ओं नमः ऐश्वर्याय शिरसे स्वाहा।
ओं नारायणाय शक्त्यै शिखायै वौषट्। ओं ओं बलाय कवचाय हुम्।
ओं नमः तेजसे नेत्राभ्यां वौषट्। ओं नारायणाय वीर्याय अस्त्राय फट्।
भूर्भुवस्सुवः। ओं इति दिग्बन्धः।

+ May also add the following

आकारत्रय-सम्पन्नां अरविन्द-निवासिनीम्।
अशेषजगत् + ईशित्रीं वन्दे वरद-वल्लभाम्॥
भगवन्-नारायण + अभिमत + अनुरूप-स्वरूप + रूप + गुण + विभव + ऐश्वर्य
+ शीलादि-अनवधिकातिशय असंख्येय कल्याणगुणगणां, पद्मवन + आलयां, भगवतीं, श्रियं,
देवीं, नित्य + अनपायिनी, निरवद्यां, देवदेव-दिव्यमहिषीं, अखिलजगन्मातरं, अस्मन्-मातरम्,
अशरण्यशरण्यां, अनन्य-शरणः शरणम् + अहं प्रपद्ये ॥

** Persons of Varnathraya (Males only) can add 'Pranava' (ओं) also in the beginning.

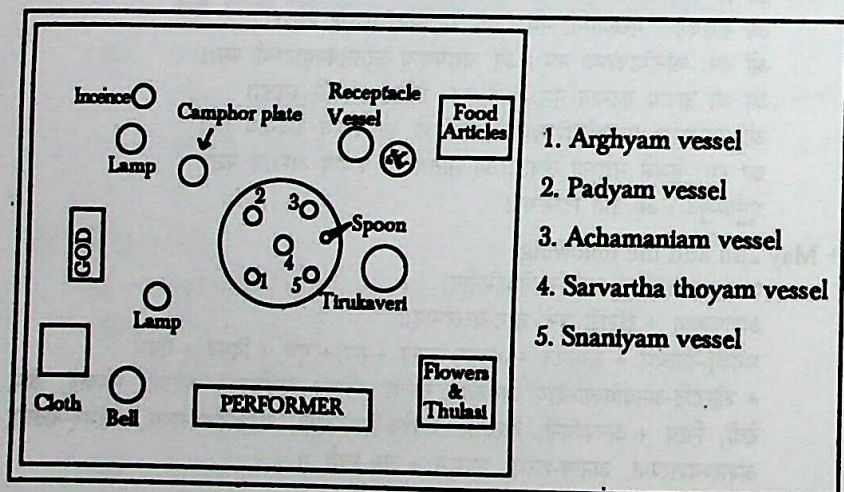
APPENDIX II

A SIMPLIFIED VERSION OF BAHYA ARADANA

[Based on 'Sankshipta Bhagavatha aradhana Krama' by Veda Ratnam Veda Bhusana A. Ananta Narasimhachar, head of Sanskrit department, APS College of Commerce, Bangalore.]

Part A - Explanatory Notes

- (i) *Aradhana* is a form of worship of the Lord by offering Him various Courtesies. The basis of worship is given in the *nitya grantha* of Sri Ramanuja. A simplified version is given here.
- (ii) As already explained in this book, Srivaishnavism is based on expressions of love and subordination to God. Further, God is also kind, and He accepts whatever is given with pure love. This aspect has to be kept in mind during performance of Aradanam. One should experience, mentally the various courtesies offered to the Lord during Aradanam.
- (iii) The Sketch below gives the various accessories and their placement :



- (a) The items bell, lamps, incense, camphor plate, plate with flowers and thulasi and food articles do not require any explanation.

- (b) *Tirukaveri* is only a vessel with a capacity of half to one litre. The water requirement for the ritual is held here and is consecrated through hymns before use.
- (c) There are 5 small cups placed in a plate along with a spoon (shown as 1,2,3,4, and 5). These cups are designated as *Arghyam*', *Padyam*', *Achamaniyam*', *Sarvarthathoyam*' and *Snaniyam*' vessels. These vessels contain water. *Arghyam* is a courtesy by which water is offered to the lord for washing hands. This courtesy is offered from the *Arghyam* vessel. *Padyam*' is a courtesy by which we wash the feet of the Lord with water. This courtesy is offered from *Padyam* vessel. *Achamanam* is a purificatory process (as in *Sandya Vandanam*). Water for *Achamanam* is offered to the Lord from the *Achamaniyam* vessel. Water in the *snaniyam* vessel is used for the ritualistic bath. Water held in '*Sarvarthathoyam*' vessel is used for all other courtesies (except the above four), as the name itself suggests. The receptacle vessel (*Pratigraha patra*) receives water from the above 5 vessels after offering the courtesy to the Lord. The receptacle vessel is associated with a perforated lid. This lid is used during the ritualistic bath to the Lord.
- (d) *Offering the courtesies*
- Arghyam* is offered to the Lord thus: take a spoon full of water from *Arghyam* vessel. Chanting '*Om namo Narayanaya, Arghyam Samarpayami*' is offered to the lord and put in the receptacle vessel. In doing so, we must mentally feel that water is offered for washing hands. The procedure is same for *padyam*. Here we must feel that we are washing the feet of Lord. Two spoons of water is offered. For *Achamaniyam*, three spoons of water is offered. *Sarvartha thoyam* is used for courtesies such as *vastram* (cloth), *Abharana* (ornaments), *Gandham* (Sandal paste), *Hasta Prakshalam* (washing hands after food) *Gandusham* (rinsing the mouth with water after food). However *Vastram* (cloth), *Abharana* (ornaments) can also be offered through flowers. The procedure is same as in *Arghyam*.

- (e). *Sattu morai* - Apart from offering courtesies, the Aradhanam includes an item known as 'Sattumorai'. 'Sattumorai' means making a request to the Lord. Our Srivaishnava Acharyas have strongly emphasised that the only favour we should ask from the Lord is to serve him and worship his feet for ever and nothing else. Andal in her Tirupavai has given two excellent verses conveying the above. Hence, the two concluding verses of Andal's Tirupavai are chanted during Aradhanam.

The vedic tradition is to conclude any ritual with benediction (Mangalam). Even Aradhanam is concluded with benediction to the Lord. In Tamil, the benediction is referred as "*Pallandu*". Therefore, the Aradhanam is concluded with the first two verse's of *Peri Alwar's* 'Tirupallandu'.

- (iv). The procedure given here is for worshipping the Lord is '*Saligramam*'. The *Saligramam* is an Archa form of the Lord. **It is also Swayamvyakta - that is, the Lord resides there under his sweet will to bless the worshipper and his family.**
- (v) The following preliminaries should be completed before commencing the Aradhanam namely, collection of flowers, lighting of lamps, lighting of incense, collection of food items, etc. The water in the Tirukaveri is flavoured by adding saffron, cardamon, camphor (food variety) and others. According to Medical Journals these additives have great medicinal values viz. blood purification, prevention of cancer, etc.
- (vi) Aradhanam should be commenced after completing sandyavandanam, Japam of Srivaishnava mantras, etc.
- (vii) The vessels used should be either of copper or silver as these materials have better Bio-electricity characteristics.
- (viii) One should be dressed in cotton during aradhanam (to help absorption of Bio-energy).

Part B - Hymns and Procedure

1. **आचमनम्** (2 times) (as in Sandyavandanam)
2. **प्राणायामम्** (as in Sandyavandanam).

3. (Salute the nityas and muktas in vaikuntam through the following hymn).

कूर्मादीन् दिव्यलोकं तदनुमणिमयं मंटपं तत्रशेषं।

तस्मिन् धर्मादि पीठं तदुपरि कमलं चामरग्राहिणीश्च।

विष्णुं देवीः भूषागणायुध मुरगं पादुके वैनतेयं।

सेनेशं द्वारपालान् कुमुदमुखगणान् विष्णुभक्तान् प्रपद्ये॥

सर्वमन्त्रमूर्तये सपरिवाराय श्रीमते नारायणाय नमः।

श्रीमन् नारायण चरणौ शरणं प्रपद्ये। श्रीमते नारायणाय नमः॥

[Notes : This verse gives a description of the Lord at Vaikuntam.

A detailed meaning is as under :

I salute Lord Narayana in the form of Tortoise bearing on its back the entire universe. I salute the fourteen worlds of the universe including our earth. I salute the celestial world of Vaikuntam; the mantap studded with jewels; Adishesha inside the mantap; the four feet of the pillars of the mantap representing Dharma (Justice), Ghyana (knowledge), Vairagya (renunciation) and Aishwarya (Wealth); the body of the four pillars representing Adharma (injustice), Agyana (lack of knowledge), Avairagya (non-renunciation) and Anaishwarya (Poverty); lotus flower with 8 petals in the middle of Adishesha who has rolled himself in circular pattern; the sun in the middle of the petals; moon in the filament of the flower; eight ladies standing on the eight petals (Vimala Utkarshini, Ghyana, Shriya, Yoga, Satya, Prahvi and Anugraha) offering the service of chamara (a bushy type fan denoting the dignity or status of an individual) to the Lord; the Lord who is seated in the centre of the Lotus flower along with his consorts - Sri, Bhu and Neela; Acharyas who are on the left side of the Mantap; the dress and ornaments worn by the Lord such as silken apparels, crown, ear rings, arm rings, waist belt etc.; the weapons held by the Lord such as conch, wheel, mace, bow, sword and lotus; the Paduka of the Lord; Vainateya (Garuda); Vishwakshena (Commander-in-chief); Guards Chanda-Prachnda, Bhadra-Subhadra, Dhatra-Vidhatra; Jaya-vijaya guarding doors of Vaikuntam in four directions; armed guards Kumuda, Kumudaksha; Pundarika, Vamana, Sanka Karna, Sarpa netra, Sumuka, Supratista guarding the eight directions of the Vaikuntam; and other devotees of Lord Vishnu such Nityas and Muktas. I salute the auspicious form of Lord Narayana with all his Paraphernalia]

4. Enter pooja room with your right foot; complete preliminaries (lighting of lamp, etc.); sit to the right of the Lord facing east or north.
5. Ashtakshara Pranayamam
6. Sankalpa:
सङ्कल्पः
श्री भगवदाज्ञया श्रीमन्नारायण प्रीत्यर्थं भगवत् इज्या आराधनं करिष्ये।
7. Satvika Thyaga

भगवानेव स्वनियाम्य स्वरूप स्थितिप्रवृत्ति स्वशेषतैक रसेन मया स्वकीयेष्ट उपकरणैः
स्वारथेनैक प्रयोजनाय परमपुरुषः सर्वशेषी श्रियपतिः स्वशेषशतमिदं भगवत् इज्याराध-
नाख्य कर्म स्वस्मै स्वप्रीतये स्वयमेव कारयति।

8. Waking up the Lord through the following hymn:

कौसल्या सुप्रजाराम!पूर्वासख्या प्रवर्तते।

उत्तिष्ठ नरशार्दूल त्रैलोक्यं मंगलं कुरु॥

[Notes : This is how Sage Viswamitra woke up the Lord. Oh! Noble son of Kousalya! Oh! the best amongst men! Oh Rama! Sandya time is approaching in the east. Please wake up. Grace the three worlds with prosperity]

Ring the bell, clap three times, and open the Box containing the Archa form of the Lord (Saligramam). Mentally welcome the Lord and Pray for his help to perform the worship.

9. Purifying (energising) the water.

a. Take one spoon full of water from Tirukaveri and hold it above head with the left hand and cover it with right hand. Chant Ashtakshara Seven times, meditating on the Lord at Vaikuntam with water of Viraja river from his left toe flowing into the spoon and Sanctifying the water in the spoon. Sprinkle this water on self and puja materials. Put back the balance in TiruKaveri. (The significance is that the water from river viraja emanating from the left toe of the Lord purifies the water in the spoon. The relevance of this ritual can be appreciated in the light of chakras in hand explained in Chapter I.

b. Pour water from TiruKaveri to the 5 cups.

c. Closing each cup with right hand, purification is done by chanting:

ओं नमो नारायणाय अर्घ्यम् परिकल्पयामि

ओं नमो नारायणाय पादौ परिकल्पयामि

ओं नमो नारायणाय आचमनीयं परिकल्पयामि

ओं नमो नारायणाय स्नानीयं परिकल्पयामि

ओं नमो नारायणाय सार्वार्थतोयं परिकल्पयामि

10. Mantrasanam

ओं नमो नारायणाय मन्त्रासनं अलङ्कुरुष्व।

- ओं नमो नारायणाय अर्घ्यं समर्पयामि।
ओं नमो नारायणाय पादम् समर्पयामि (2 times)
ओं नमो नारायणाय आचमनीयं समर्पयामि। (3 times)
ओं नमो नारायणाय दूपं आघ्रापयामि।
ओं नमो नारायणाय दीपं दर्शयामि।

11. Snana Sanam

ओं नमो नारायणाय स्नानासनं अलङ्कुरुष्व

Place the Saligramam on the Perforated plate covering the receptacle vessel.

- ओं नमो नारायणाय दन्तकाष्ठं समर्पयामि (from Sarvartha thoyam vessel)
ओं नमो नारायणाय जिह्वानिलेहनं समर्पयामि
ओं नमो नारायणाय गण्डध्वं समर्पयामि
ओं नमो नारायणाय मुख प्रक्षालनं समर्पयामि
ओं नमो नारायणाय हस्त प्रक्षालनं समर्पयामि
ओं नमो नारायणाय स्नानं समर्पयामि (Snaniyam vessel)

Perform the ritualistic bath chanting Ashtakshara 28 times, taking water from Snaniyam vessel. Dry the saligramam with a dry cloth.

[Note : The Prokshana mantras of Sandyavandanam can also be used. Those who have time can chant Purushasuktam, Narayana Anuvakam; Vishnu Sukam; Sree Sukam; Bhu Sukam; and Neela Sukam. Bath both in milk and water is also done]

12. Alankarasana

- ओं नमो नारायणाय अलङ्कारासनं अलङ्कुरुष्व
ओं नमो नारायणाय वस्त्रं समर्पयामि (From Sarvartha thoyam)
ओं नमो नारायणाय आभरणानि समर्पयामि (From Sarvartha thoyam)
ओं नमो नारायणाय अर्घ्यम् समर्पयामि
ओं नमो नारायणाय पादम् समर्पयामि
ओं नमो नारायणाय आचमनीयं समर्पयामि
ओं नमो नारायणाय ऊर्ध्वपुङ्खं समर्पयामि
ओं नमो नारायणाय उपवीतं समर्पयामि
ओं नमो नारायणाय गन्धं समर्पयामि
ओं नमो नारायणाय दूपं आघ्रापयामि
ओं नमो नारायणाय दीपं दर्शयामि
ओं नमो नारायणाय पुष्पं समर्पयामि।

(Worship the feet of the Lord with flowers chanting the following).
(Archana)

- a. हरिः ओं। अग्निमीळे प्ररोहितां यज्ञस्य देवमृत्विजम्।
होतारं रत्नधातमम्। हरिः ओं । (Rigveda)
- b. हरिः ओं। इषे त्वोर्जे त्वा वायवस्थो
पायवस्थ। देवो वः सविता प्रार्पयद्
श्रेष्ठतमाय कर्मणे॥ हरिः ओं । (Yajurveda)
- c. हरिः ओं। अग्न आयाहि वीतये गुणानो हव्यदातये।
निहोता सधिस बर्हिषि॥ हरिः ओं । (Sama veda)
- d. हरिः ओं। शन्नो देवीरभिष्टय आपो भवन्तु पीतये।
शं योरभिस्रवन्तु नः॥ हरिः ओं । (Atarva veda)

(If above is not possible, Gayathri Mantra can be chanted four times)

- e. ओं वासुदेवाय नमः। ओं महालक्ष्मै नमः।
ओं संकर्षणाय नमः। ओं कीर्त्यै नमः।
ओं प्रद्युम्नाय नमः। ओं जयायै नमः।
ओं अनिरुद्धाय नमः। ओं मायायै नमः।
ओं केशवाय नमः। ओं नारायणाय नमः।
ओं माधवाय नमः। ओं गोविन्दाय नमः।
ओं विष्णवे नमः। ओं मधुसूदनाय नमः।
ओं त्रिविक्रमाय नमः। ओं वामनाय नमः।
ओं श्रीधराय नमः। ओं हृषीकेशाय नमः।
ओं पद्मनाभाय नमः। ओं दामोदराय नमः।
ओं भ्रियै नमः। ओं अमृतोद्धवायै नमः।
ओं कमलायै नमः। ओं चन्द्रशेखर्यै नमः।
ओं हरिवल्लभायै नमः। ओं विष्णुपत्न्यै नमः।
ओं वैष्णव्यै नमः। ओं वरारोहायै नमः।
ओं शार्ङ्गिण्यै नमः। ओं देवदेविकायै नमः।
ओं महालक्ष्म्यै नमः। ओं सुरसुन्दर्यै नमः।
ओं सर्वाभीष्टफलप्रदायै नमः।
ओं सर्वमन्त्राळं स्तुतये सपरिवाराय श्रीमते नारायणाय नमः॥

[Note : If an individual has time, he can perform Archana chanting Ashtothara sata Namavali or Sahasra Namavali. As a part of Worship one can read (Parayanam) vedas,

Divya Prabhandam, Ramayana, Bagavat Gita, Bhagavatham, etc. In the case of Parayanam, the last Ric or last two hymns of the subject of parayanam is recited in Sattumurai before mangala sasanam]

13. Bhojyasana

ओं नमो नारायणाय भोज्यासनं अलंकुरुष्व

a. Sprinkle water from Arghyam vessel on the food items reciting
ओं नारायणाय वीर्यायास्त्रायफट्

b. offer food to the Lord in the conventional way reciting

ओं शुश्रूवस्सुवः। ओं सत्यं त्वर्तेन परिषिञ्चामि।

ओं अमृत उपस्तरणमसि।

ओं प्राणाय स्वाहा। ओं अपानाय स्वाहा।

ओं व्यानाय स्वाहा। ओं उदानाय स्वाहा।

ओं समानाय स्वाहा। ओं ब्रह्मणिम आत्मा अमृतत्वाय।

(Chant Ashtakshra 10 times mentally realising that the Lord is taking food) ओं अमृतापि धानमसि।

c. ओं नमो नारायणाय हस्तप्रक्षालम् समर्पयामि।

ओं नमो नारायणाय गंडुखं समर्पयामि

14. Punamantrasana

ओं नमो नारायणाय अर्घ्यम् समर्पयामि

ओं नमो नारायणाय पादम् समर्पयामि।

ओं नमो नारायणाय आचामनीयं समर्पयामि।

ओं नमो नारायणाय कर्पूर नीराजनं समर्पयामि।

(Offer camphor -courtesy chanting the following)

तद्विष्णोः परमं पदं सदा पश्यन्ति सुरयः।

दिवीव चक्षुराततम्। तद्विप्रा सो विपन्यवो

जागृवां सस्समिन्धते। विष्णोर्यत्परमं पदं॥

[Notes : Karpura Nirajanam is also called 'Mangalarathi'. The camphor light is initially held at the level of the feet of the Lord, and slowly moved up to waist, chest, face etc., and back to feet. In this way, three rounds are completed. The meaning of the hymn (from Rig Samhita) chanted is :

"Nityas and Mukhas are always seeing the Lord in Vaikuntam like a Sun (resmbing an eye) spread everywhere in the sky. They who are wise and intelligent praise the Vishnu's abode (Vaikuntam) through excellent hymns".

The use of word 'Tad vishnoo' in this hymn is note worthy. According to Vyasa

Smrithi, one offers his soul as an oblation to the Lord by chanting the hymn *Tadvishno*. Thus, the chanting of the hymn also indicates '*Saranagathi*'. The word '*Mangalarathi*' also means - removal of obstacles. Hence, this hymn is chanted during '*Mangalarathi*' to help removal of obstacles for *Saranagathi*.

The '*Karpura Nirajana*' is akin to '*Purnahuti*' in *Yagnas* and *Yagas*. It is said that the Lord gives Darsan to devotees at the time of *purnahuti*.]

[Alternatively, the following is also chanted during कर्पूर नीराजन-

श्रीयः कान्ताय कल्याण निधये निधयेर्थिनाम्।

श्री वेन्दुनिवासाय श्रीनिवासाय मन्मथम्॥

मन्मथा ज्ञासनपरैः मदाचार्य पुरोगमैः।

सर्वैश्च पूर्वैराचार्यैः सक्ततायास्तु मन्मथम्॥]

15. Sattumurai and Mangalam (Chant with folded hands or offering flowers)

1. शित्तं शिक्काले वन्दन्नै स्सेविच्च

उन् पोत्तायै अडिये पोत्तं पोरुक्केळाय्

पेत्तं मेय्युत्तुण्णं कलत्तिल् पिरन्द

नी कृत्तेवल् एङ्गळै कोळ्ळामल् पोहाद।

इत्तैप्पै कोळ्वान् अनृकाण् गोविन्दा

एत्तैक्कं एळेक् पिरविक्कं

उत्तन्नोड् उत्तोमेयावोम् उनक्के नाम् आळ्चेय्वोम्

यत्तेनं कामङ्गळ् मात्तेलोरेम्बावाय् ॥ (2 times)

2. वङ्गक्कडल कडैन्द माधवनैक्केशवने

तिङ्गळ्तिरुमुहच्च च्चेयिळैयार् शेन्निरैङ्गि

अङ्गप्पैकोण्डवार्तै

अणिपुदवैप्पैक्कमल तण्डेरियल् भट्टर्पिरान् गोदैशेन्ना

शेङ्गत्तमिळ् मालै मुप्पदं तप्पामे

इङ्गिप्परिञ्चैय्यार् ईरिरिङ्ग माल्वरैतोळ्

शेङ्गण् तिरुमुहच्च शेल्वत्तिरुमालाल्

एङ्गुम् तिरुवळ्ळुपेच्च इन्डुवर् एम्बावाय्॥ (2 times)

(Chant last two verses of the Parayanam items here)

3. Benediction

पत्ताण्ड् पत्ताण्ड् पत्तायिरत्ताण्ड्

पलकोटि न्नायिरम् पत्ताण्ड् तिप्पतोळ् मणिवण्णा

उन् शेबडि शेव्वि तिरुक्काप्पु॥
अडियोमोडं निन्नोडं पिरिविन्नि आयिरं पल्लाण्ड
वडिवाय् निन् वलमार्बिनिल् वाळ्किन्न मङ्गेयुम् पल्लाण्ड।
वडिवार् शेदिवलच्चरैयम् शुडराळियं पल्लाण्ड
पडैपोर् पुक्कळु मुळङ्गम् अण्णाञ्चजन्यमुं पल्लाण्डे॥

16. ओं नमो नारायणाय अर्घ्यम् समर्पयामि
ओं नमो नारायणाय पादम् समर्पयामि
ओं नमो नारायणाय आचमनीयम् समर्पयामि
ओं नमो नारायणाय फल ताम्बूलं समर्पयामि

17. Paryankasanam
ओं नमो नारायणाय पर्यन्कासनं अलङ्कुरु
ओं नमो नारायणाय क्षीरं निवेदयामि
ओं नमो नारायणाय योगनिद्राम् उपाकुरु

Prostrate before the Lord

मम सर्व अपराधान् क्षमस्व

(Thus pleading apology for mistakes, the box containing the saligramam should be closed)

18. Submission of the fruits to the Lord Himself.
भगवानेव स्वनियाम्य स्वरूपस्थिति प्रवृत्ति स्वशेषतैक रसेन मया स्वकीयेऽथ उपकरणैः
स्वाराधनैक प्रयोजनाय परमपुरुषः सर्वशेषी प्रियपतिः स्वशेष भूतमिदं भगवत् इज्याराध-
नाय कर्म स्वस्मै स्वप्रीतये स्वयमेव कारितवान्

19. Chant the Tanian of the Acharya and Acharya Parampara.

[Note : The left over water in the 5 cups is added to the receptacle vessel. The performer should take the holy water three times first and then give it to others. On days when the individual has to perform pithru tharpanam, the holy water should be taken after performing the tharpanam.]

(Sri Krishnarpanamastu)

Part - C Ashtakshara Aradhanam

[Note : Here the Aradhanam is performed by chanting Ashtakshara Mantra only. Well meaning elders feel that those who are not placed in favourable circumstances, can start Aradhanam through Ashtakshara Mantra only and gradually improve. A saligramam present in a house should not be left unworshipped.]

1. आचमनम्
2. अष्टाक्षर प्राणायामम्
3. श्री भगवदाज्ञया श्रीमन् नारायणप्रीत्यर्थम् अष्टाक्षर मन्त्रेण भगवत् आराधनं करिष्ये।
4. कौसल्या सुप्रजाराम! पूर्वासंस्था प्रवर्तते।
उत्तिष्ठ नरशार्दूल त्रैलोक्यं मंगलं कुरु॥ (Open the box)
5. ओं नमो नारायणाय अर्घ्यम् समर्पयामि
ओं नमो नारायणाय पादम् समर्पयामि
ओं नमो नारायणाय आचमनीयम् समर्पयामि
6. ओं नमो नारायणाय स्नानं समर्पयामि
(Chant Ashtakshara 10 times. Give ritualistic bath/ Dry Saligramam)
7. ओं नमो नारायणाय वस्त्रम् समर्पयामि।
ओं नमो नारायणाय आभरणानि समर्पयामि।
ओं नमो नारायणाय ऊर्ध्वपुङ्गुम् समर्पयामि।
ओं नमो नारायणाय उपवीतम् समर्पयामि।
ओं नमो नारायणाय गन्धम् समर्पयामि।
ओं नमो नारायणाय द्रवम् समर्पयामि।
ओं नमो नारायणाय दीपम् दर्शयामि।
ओं नमो नारायणाय पुष्पम् समर्पयामि।
(Chant Ashtakshara ten times offering flowers)
8. ओं नमो नारायणाय निवेदनं समर्पयामि
(Offer food in the usual way (part B) and chant Ashtaksharam)
ओं नमो नारायणाय हस्त प्रक्षालनं समर्पयामि
ओं नमो नारायणाय गन्धं समर्पयामि
ओं नमो नारायणाय फलतांदुलं समर्पयामि

9. ओं नमो नारायणाय अर्घ्यम् समर्पयामि
ओं नमो नारायणाय पादाम् समर्पयामि
ओं नमो नारायणाय आचमनीयं समर्पयामि
ओं नमो नारायणाय कर्पूर नीराजनं दर्शयामि
(Chant Dvayam 10 times)
10. ओं नमो नारायणाय पार्यङ्कासनम् अलङ्कुरुष्व
ओं नमो नारायणाय योगनिद्राम् उपाकुरु
मम सर्व अपराधान् क्षमस्व
(Prostrate and close the box)
11. Chant Taniam of Acharya and Guruparampara.
[Note :This format can be suitably used for Mental worship or Manasika
Aradhana.]

Part D - Hymns in Sanskrit for Sattumorai

(The following Sanskrit hymns also convey the spirit of Sattumorai)

1. श्री वल्लभेति वरदेति दयापरेति
भक्तप्रियेति भवलुन्तन कोविदेति ।
नायेति नागशयनेति जगन्निवासेति
आलापनं प्रतिपदं कुरु मे सुकुन्द ॥
2. सुकुन्द सुर्ना प्रणिपत्य दाचे
भवन्तमेकान्तम् इयन्तं अर्घ्यम् ।
अविस्पृतिः त्वच्चरणारविन्दे
भवे भवे मेऽस्तु भवत्प्रसादात् ॥
3. Benediction
श्रीयः कान्ताय कल्याण निखये निष्येर्षिनाम् ।
श्री वेङ्कटनिवासाय श्रीनिवासाय मन्गळम् ॥
मन्गळा शासनपरैः मदाचार्य पुरोगमैः ।
सर्वेष्ट पूर्वैराचार्यैः सत्कृतायास्तु मन्गळम्॥

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